

Airport fire may lead to prosecution

John Mullin

PROSECUTORS are considering criminal charges against maintenance workers after 16 people, including one Briton, died at Dusseldorf in Germany's worst airport fire, it emerged yesterday.

They will also consider action against the airport's management. City fire fighters were not alerted until 30 minutes after the blaze was discovered.

Thick, black smoke filled the airport hall, packed with 2,500 travellers and staff, within 30 seconds

Among those who died was Martin Smith, aged 22, serving with the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards in Munster. He on his way home to Tamworth, Staffordshire, on leave when he was caught in Thursday's blaze.

Seven Germans, six French, and two Italians were also among those suffocated from poisonous fumes, some while trapped in a lift jammed between floor and others in an air France waiting lounge. The youngest victim was a seven-year-old German boy who died with his father.

Most of the dead were returning from Easter breaks. Dusseldorf airport is the busiest in Germany dealing with charter flights.

Prosecutor Rolf Chantaux said: "We have opened an inquest for negligent arson and negligent killing." He was targeting a wide group of people, not only a group of welders who were working above a flower shop in Terminal A when they inadvertently melted a bitumen sealant. The sealant dripped onto a false floor containing electrical wiring. The PVC-covered cables began to smoulder, giving off cyanide, chloride, carbon monoxide, and possibly dioxin.

The fumes were funnelled down ventilation shafts to both the arrivals and the railway station underneath the terminal. Thick black smoke filled the hall, packed with 2,500 travellers and staff, within 30 seconds. Passengers panicked as they saw the fumes and ignored instructions to use fire exits.

A fire brigade spokesman said it had not been alerted until almost 30 minutes after the fire was spotted. Fire fighters took five hours to bring it under control.

Investigators sifting through the gutted hall yesterday were wearing breathing apparatus. There was an acrid stench, and officials were keeping people well clear.

Officials will focus on what modifications must be made to ventilation systems to avoid such a rapid spread of the fumes should a similar fire break out elsewhere.



Hans Rausing, with £2,880 million, heads 10 billionaires topping Britain's wealth list. Six were millionaires in last year's list

Britain's rich are getting richer

Wealthy need £1bn to make it to the top, reports Angella Johnson

BITAIN'S rich are getting richer, with billionaires filling the top places in the nation's wealth league for the first time in five years.

Ian Coxon, who helped to compile the list published yesterday, said that growing riches were evident through the survey. "I think it's the things are going in the economy," he said. "It's a general trend throughout the list. The rich are getting richer."

But while many can be seen doing speculative well in the annual Sunday Times survey of Britain's richest 500 people, only 38 women managed to qualify.

At the top of the women's list was the Queen, with a personal fortune estimated at £650 million.

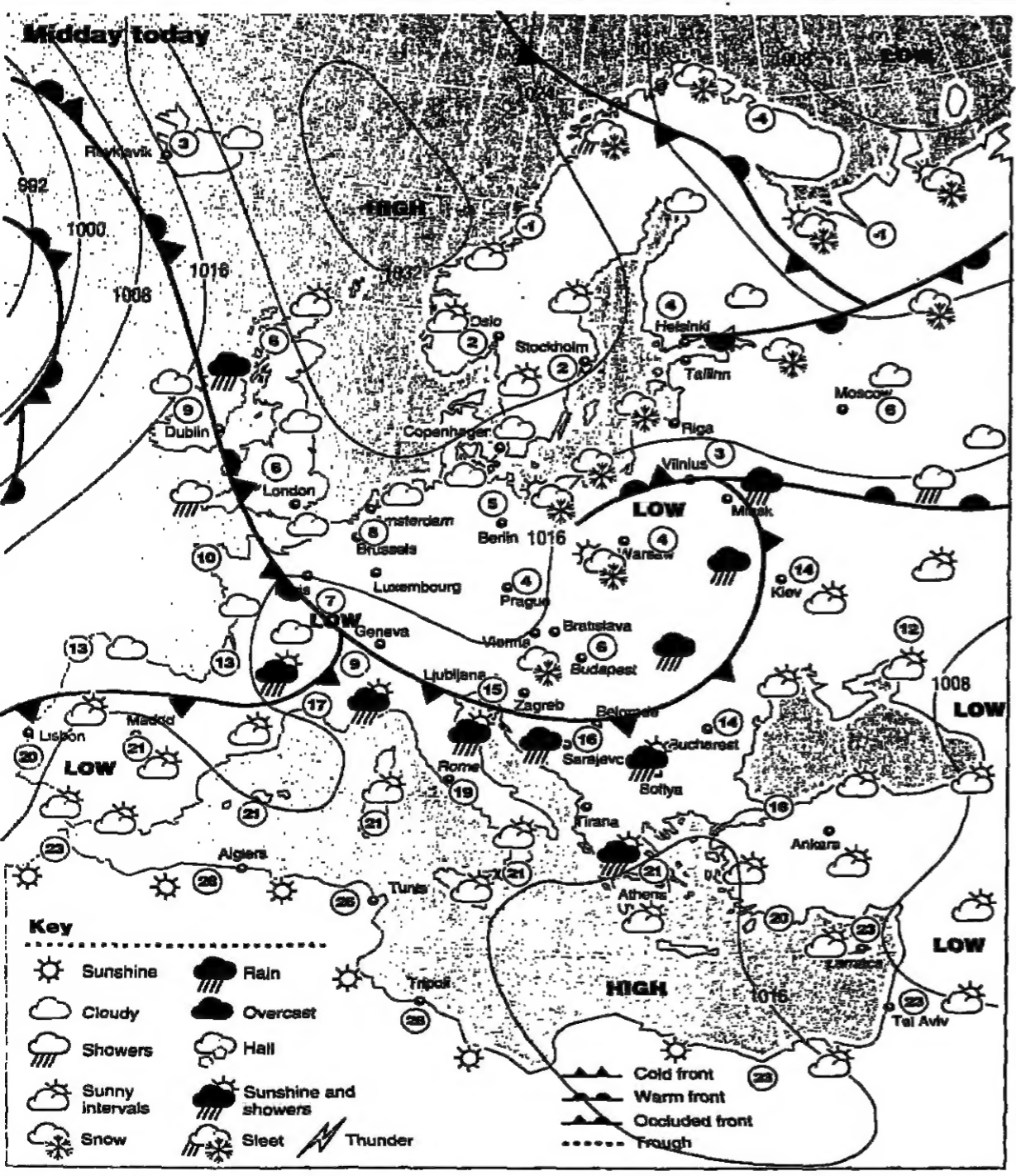
But Margaret Barbour, chairman of the company making the country set's favourite walking jacket, comes to the fore as a very rapid riser. Mrs Barbour, who has steered the family clothing business since the death of her husband, replaces Body Shop founder

Anita Roddick as Britain's fifth richest woman. She has seen her wealth almost double from £50 million to £150 million. Ms Roddick, however, has seen a decline in her fortune by about £20 million, taking her to seventh place.

The three hard men of cinema, Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger, may be the names people think of when they talk about the Planet Hollywood restaurant. But a lesser known investor in the burger chain is Robert Earl, who according to the survey is set to become the first restaurant billionaire by the end of the decade.

Mr Earl, aged 44, who ran the Hard Rock Cafés chain in the UK for five years, holds a 26.6 per cent stake in Planet Hollywood, valued after flotation at about \$300 million (£193 million).

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities table with columns for city, sun, rain, wind, etc.

Around the world table with columns for location, sun, rain, wind, etc.

European weather outlook. High pressure should ensure most places have a dry day with plenty of sunshine...

Television and radio - Saturday

9.00am BBC 1... 9.00am BBC 2... 9.00am BBC World News... 9.00am BBC World Service... 9.00am BBC World Service... 9.00am BBC World Service...

Television and radio - Sunday

9.00am BBC 1... 9.00am BBC 2... 9.00am BBC World News... 9.00am BBC World Service... 9.00am BBC World Service...

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UK pressed to accept euro regime

John Palmer in Verona and Ian Traynor in Bonn

THE Government came under renewed pressure last night to accept tough new disciplines to guarantee Britain's economic convergence with the rest of the European Union, even if it stays outside both the single European currency and a new EU exchange rate mechanism.

European finance ministers and central bank governors, meeting in Verona, began two days of detailed discussions about how the pound might be linked with the euro — the future single currency — even if it is not part of either monetary union or the ERM.

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, was told by several ministers that the pound should rejoin the ERM in the interests of monetary stability in Britain and throughout Europe after the single currency is launched in 1999. Britain and Italy were ejected from the exchange-rate mechanism in 1992 and the Government is loath to rejoin.

Proponents of a new ERM want to stop those outside from undermining the system through making national devaluations. But there were no calls at last night's meeting for any trade or other sanctions to be imposed against Britain if it refuses to participate in the single currency or the ERM.

Discussion in Verona is focusing on how to get all 15 EU countries to achieve closer economic convergence. The meeting was told that there should in future be more detailed scrutiny of national economic and monetary policies for all member states.

The EU economic affairs commissioner, Yves Thibault de Mussy, said he believed "the commission and Council of Ministers should increase their surveillance of national economic policies. They should also be expected to approve any emergency measures which a national government might be forced to take to ensure it remains on track to clear convergence."

He endorsed a proposal by Hans Tietmeyer, chief of Germany's powerful Bundesbank, who has made it clear

that he wants the governor of a future European central bank to have powers not only over those joining a single currency but also over those EU currencies left outside, to avert the risk of "competitive devaluation".

On no account, however, do the Germans want a European central bank to intervene to defend EU currencies outside EMU against market onslaughts.

Mr Tietmeyer dismissed as "false" all speculation that the Bundesbank was anti-EMU. But his attempted reassurance followed a highly sceptical speech on the single currency from his bank's chief economist and board member, Otmar Issing. Mr Issing told a Vienna conference that a single currency probably would not spur economic and jobs growth, as claimed by Bonn and Brussels. He said EU countries had wasted five years since Maastricht in failing to pursue the right kind of economic convergence.

Since 1991, he noted, the average EU national state debt had soared from 56 to 71 per cent of GDP. Nailing his colours to the mast of EMU-scepticism, he declared that European integration could not only be driven by "visionaries".

It remains unclear whether any specific penalties will be incurred by non-EMU countries which fail to comply with the reinforced convergence targets. There is little support for a French proposal to fine those who stray. The surveillance role of the commission and Council of Ministers would reinforce the requirement for any member state to have unanimous support.

The Irish finance minister, Ruairi Quinn, said last night that Britain, and other non-participants would "be expected to manage currency policy as a matter of the common interest of all European Union member states".

Mr Clarke and the Swedish finance minister believe they can contribute to the goal of wider European currency stability by agreeing to tough new national inflation targets.

Money Guardian, page 21

Man held over IRA bombings

Duncan Campbell and David Sharrock

AMAN was being held in Dublin last night in connection with IRA mainland bombing activities. Anti-terrorist branch officers in London hope he may be able to help their inquiries.

The man, aged 25, from the Finglas area of Dublin, was arrested by Special Branch officers on Thursday although details of his arrest only emerged yesterday.

He is not believed to be able to assist the police about the most recent mainland bombing campaign involving bombs at Canary Wharf and in the West End of London.

A surveillance operation had been mounted by the Irish police after the end of the IRA ceasefire.

Irish detectives received information from their counterparts in London after the discovery of documents in a search of the flat occupied by Ed O'Brien, the IRA bomber

from Co Westford, who blew himself up in the Aldwych bus blast soon after the Docklands incident.

"The man arrested was one of a number of suspects under constant supervision as a result of what was found in O'Brien's London base."

It is understood that the man is most likely to be questioned about attempted bombings in August 1994 in Brighton and Bognor Regis, which involved attaching small quantities of Semtex explosives to bicycles.

Shops were damaged in one of the strikes, but there were no casualties.

It is also understood that anti-terrorist branch officers have still to decide whether to apply for his extradition.

"We do not discuss arrests outside the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom," a Scotland Yard spokesman said.

Under the Irish Offences Against the State Act, used by police to arrest the man in Dublin, suspects can be held up to 48 hours.

Britain condemns Spain for Gibraltar border checks

Foreign Staff

BRTAIN issued a strong condemnation last night of strict new border controls imposed by Spain on traffic at the border with Gibraltar.

The checks, aimed at signalling anger at what Madrid says is Britain's lax attitude towards Moroccan drug smuggling through its colony, caused delays of up to four hours at the frontier yesterday. Long queues of cars and pedestrians snaked back from the crossing point.

The controls were put in place after a Spanish civil

guardian died in a helicopter crash of suspected smugglers on Wednesday.

David Davis, the Foreign Office minister, called for "no operation not confrontation" to stamp out drug smuggling.

"There is absolutely no justification for the retrograde of secondary checks at the Spain-Gibraltar frontier," he said. "Disproportionate controls and delays at the frontier do not solve the problem."

There was no evidence that drugs crossed the land border, he claimed. This week's incident proved drug smuggling took place at sea.

Americans of all descriptions love the young, the fresh, the winsome, and Tony Blair supplies all that and more. Add to that the fact that he looks like a winner, proclaimed by no less august an authority than Tina Brown's New Yorker to be "the next prime minister", and you have an almost perfect package for Yankee consumption.

Johnny Apple on an American success story

Outlook page 13



Prince Edward with a portrait of his great-uncle, Edward VIII, who abdicated in 1936

Edward on Edward

Andrew Cull Media Correspondent

THE last time a member of the royal family took a starring role on television, Buckingham Palace said smugly that the Queen did not watch Panorama.

Now the Queen and other senior members of the household have had an advance screening of an ITV documentary, written and presented by a young television executive who styles himself Edward Windsor. It is unlikely to send shock waves through the monarchy.

Edward Windsor tells the story of Edward VIII's abdication and the years the Duke and Duchess of Windsor spent in exile, cold-shouldered by the family, Mr Windsor, otherwise known as Prince Edward, joint managing director of Ardent Productions, said: "Yes, the family have seen it, but I'm not going to tell you what they thought."

The critics may not be so resident about the two-hour programme, to be screened on April 23 and 30 and characterised by a dearth of revelations and a leaden, clichéd script. Although publicly material claims the prince brings a rare family insight to a story surrounded by rumours and hearsay for decades, he tactfully decided not to put a microphone in front of his mother or grandmother.

"None of the royal family were interviewed," he said after a preview screening in London. "That was quite deliberate. I did not feel it was necessary to put them through that."

The role of the Queen Mother, said Windsor, was privileged access to the royal archives in the Round Tower at Windsor Castle, including correspondence between the dukes, his brother George VI, his mother Queen Mary, and Sir Winston Churchill.

Asked whether there were lessons from 1936 for today's royals, he said: "I am not sure I'm the best person to answer that."

When the prince established his production company — which has also made the Channel 4 political soap Anne's War and a BBC Top Gear motoring special — he promised he would not cash in on his royal connections. Yesterday he said: "I never said we wouldn't make programmes about the royal family."

Letters showing Edward VIII's frustration at being kept away from the world war battlefields, and a silver case he gave to a "dear friend" who was later killed in action, sold for £4,140 at auction yesterday.

Royal quest
"Rarely this century has any story become surrounded by so much myth and legend, engendered such deep emotions and made or broken so many reputations. This is why I want to discover what really happened" — Prince Edward

And five things Edward didn't discover...

- Whether the Establishment was plotting to get rid of the king at a shooting party three months before the abdication.
- Whether his sympathies with Nazi Germany caused the Foreign Office to withhold papers from him.
- Whether he planned to use the Nazis to foment a revolution in wartime Britain to regain the throne.
- Whether Anthony Blunt was really sent to Kronberg castle in Germany after the war to retrieve material about Edward's Nazi links.
- Whether as governor of the Bahamas the duke had an innocent man hanged for murder.



Group, marking the 60th anniversary of the abdication, he said: "The duke may have been awkward, selfish and intransigent to deal with, but there's no evidence he would ever betray his country." Later the prince said: "I can't uncover any evidence of that, and I have tried."

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Terror and chaos as Lebanese flee

Rebecca Smithers Political Correspondent

ONE of Britain's busiest commuter lines is to be handed over to the French utility company Compagnie Générale des Eaux on a seven year contract, it was announced yesterday.

The move came as a fresh legal challenge to the Government's privatisation plans was launched by the pressure group Save Our Railways.

The owner of the new company to be called London and South Coast Ltd, admitted that it will not provide new trains.

Antoine Hurit, vice-chairman of the new operator, said it would spend £10 million improving stations and trains over three years but insisted: "We have no provision for replacing rolling stock. There will be some improvement in presentation, but we can operate them as they are."

Much of the rolling stock dates back to the 1950s and

1960s and some is considered near the end of its life.

The French company, which has a number of business interests in Britain, will take over services running out of Victoria, London Bridge and Charing Cross stations to Kent, Sussex and Surrey — used by nearly 250,000 commuters every day.

The operation covers 440 miles of track. With the new owner pledging "reorganisation", there are fears of job losses among the 3,000-plus employees.

CGEA has just posted a record £3.5 billion (£437 million) loss, but will receive a subsidy of £25.3 million in its first year — compared to the British Rail claim for £106.28 million. This falls to £34.6 million in 2002/03.

The announcement of another line passing into private sector control was made by the franchising director, Roger Salmon, who surprised the industry this week by announcing that he was standing down two years early. He

French firm wins rail contract

Rebecca Smithers Political Correspondent

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has so far overseen the privatisation of two other lines — South West Trains and Great Western.

Yesterday Brian Wilson, Labour's rail spokesman, said: "What passengers on Network South Central need is investment in new rolling stock rather than taking part in an experiment with a French water company running British rail services. The investment promised over a seven year period is derisory, and if it remains to be seen whether the French firm can live within a declining level of subsidy while making the profit they expect."

The Liberal Democrat spokesman David Chidgey added: "This award takes privatisation, already a black farce, to undreamed-of depths. In effect, British taxpayers will be subsidising French shareholders. In return, CGEA have promised to invest £10 million over three years to improve stations and rolling stock."

Meanwhile, Save Our Railways — which represents

both passengers groups and unions — said it is taking legal action to ensure BR is allowed to bid for contracts to run privatised lines.

The group will lodge legal papers at the High Court in London next Tuesday — the start of a long-running Commons debate on rail privatisation.

Management-employee buy-out teams have been allowed to compete, but BR has been barred. The group wanted BR to bid for the L15 franchise, which is being re-run after an alleged fraud.

● A 30 per cent pay offer to train drivers in a newly-privatised Great Western includes a move to do away with second drivers in cabs.

Employees in the train drivers' union, ASLEF, will vote soon on a proposed deal, which will increase basic pay to £20,000, and raise the speed limit for driver-only trains from 110 mph to 125 mph.

Regulator signals Railtrack crisis, page 22

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The BSE crisis has raised questions about the food we eat, how it is produced and new methods being explored by the

Population growth feeds a world crisis

90m more people will this year eat into vital resources

Tim Radford
Science Editor

THE average human in a lifetime consumes 75 tons of water, 17 tons of carbohydrates, 2.5 tons of proteins and more than a ton of fats.

The world this year will acquire 90 million more people, each of whom will require the same rations of water, carbohydrates, protein and fats.

But when the year began, world grain stocks were lower than ever before: there was food for only another 48 days in the cupboard.

The future looks largely vegetarian. Economists tend to think of food in terms of grain: for them, beef is simply so much arable land that cannot be used for crops.

Food crops need sunlight, topsoil, freshwater and effort.

Sunlight is the only part of the lunch that is free. Topsoil — a mixture of loam, humus and microbes — is expensive stuff. It takes about 500 years of weathering to turn rock into an inch of topsoil.

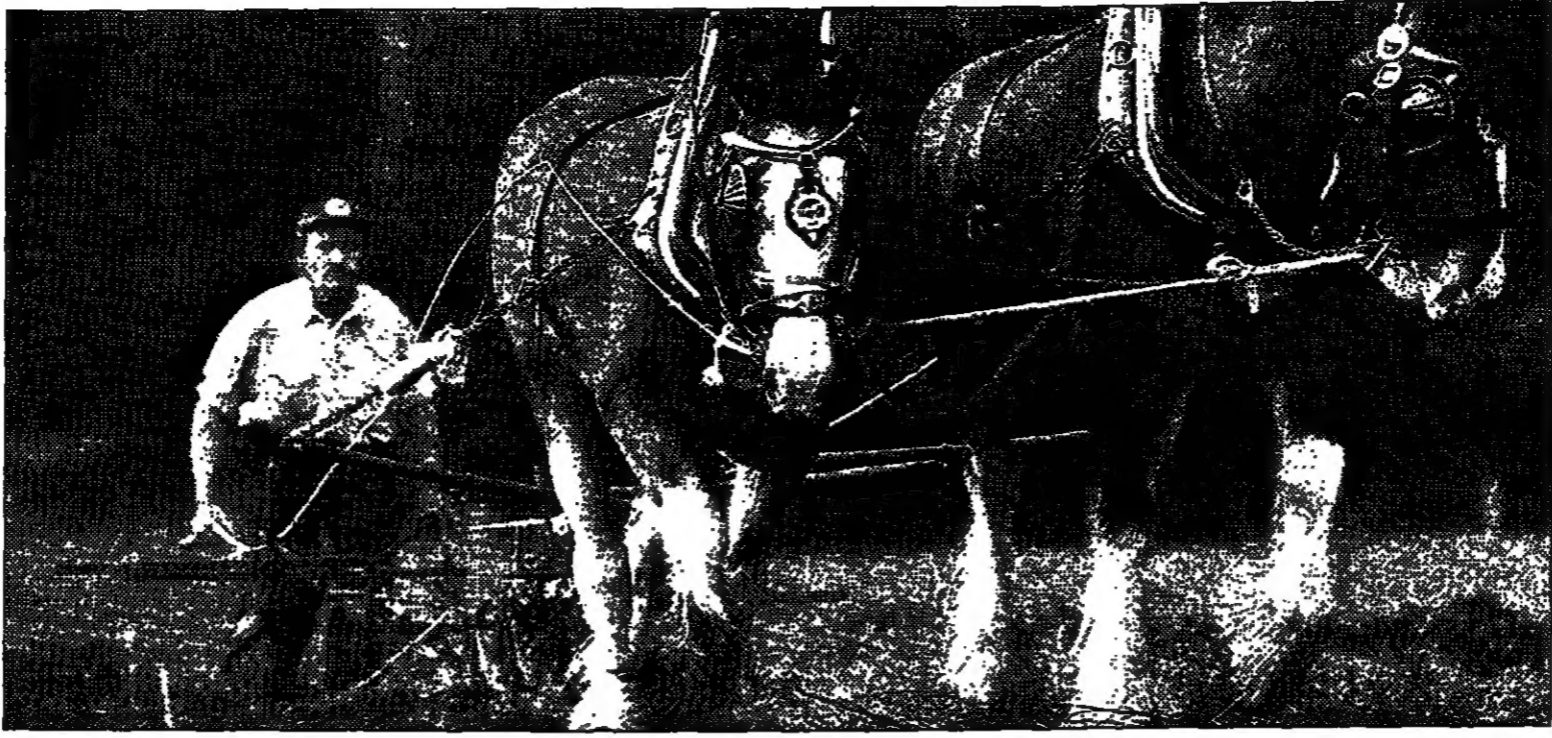
In general the deeper the topsoil, the heavier the yield, but even this depends on the right

nutrients at the right time. So to get the best out of a crop, farmers usually need nitrogen, or potash, or phosphates or all three. These have to be found, and then delivered to the crops at the right time, which requires energy, usually in the form of oil.

Then there is water: different crops have different needs. Groundnuts do quite well in arid climates. On the other hand it takes 175 gallons of water to produce one pound of corn grain. So for the past 6,000 years farmers have been engaged in a form of slow genetic engineering: continuously selecting crops that best suit local soils, water supplies and climates.

But even this has accelerated an arms race with other creatures: fungi, blights, locusts, seeworms, weevils and wild oats. Farmers not only have to keep battling against diseases, predators and competitors, but they have to keep selecting new varieties with new resistances to increase yields.

In the 1960s the process became intensely scientific: the "green revolution" devised heavy cropping ears of rice or wheat on short, fast-growing stems which required fertilisers supplied



Farming has come a long way since horses were used to plough fields, but yields are now reaching their limit

PHOTOGRAPH: DON MERRIS

by tractors and irrigation schemes backed by big banks. For a while, food supplies seemed to surge ahead of population growth. Countries like India and Indonesia became exporters of food, China became self-sufficient, huge agriproviders in the US sold their surplus to up to 120 nations.

But the "green revolution" has wiled. The first limitation is on the sun itself: the

most efficient plants cannot convert more than 2 per cent of solar energy into carbohydrates or protein, and genetic engineering is unlikely to make them do any better. The second limitation is in oil and fertilisers: between 1945 and 1985, oil use by US farmers increased fourfold and crop yields increased threefold, but the world's oil reserves are expected to run out in 50 or so years. The other thing

likely to run out very soon is the supply of phosphate. This is quite often guano: millions of years of bird droppings turned to rock. World phosphate use has been rising since 1950 by 4 per cent per year to 150 million tons a year. The US Bureau of Mines believes there is about 34 billion tons of phosphate rock left to be quarried. At present growth rates, this will run out in 55 years.

There is worse to come. The land available for agriculture is dwindling. This is in part simply because of industrialisation and the growth of the cities, in part because of pollution, and in part because of wasteful use of farmland. Badly designed irrigation schemes have increased salt levels in the soil. Or they have taken so much water from lakes and rivers that whole regions have been turned into deserts. The Aral Sea in the former Soviet Union is a classic case. Estimates vary, but one guess is that every year an area the size of the Republic of Ireland simply becomes useless.

But there is an even bigger problem. Last year a team at Cornell university calculated that soil erosion was now costing the planet \$40 billion (£27 billion) in direct damage to agricultural land and indirect damage to waterways and human health. Each year, 75 billion tons of soils are washed away by rains and floods or blown away by winds. Eighty per cent of the world's croplands suffer moderate to severe erosion. In

places — Europe and the US where land practices are good, farmers lose 17 tons of topsoil every year from every hectare. In Africa, Asia and South America, the figure is 40 tons a year. On steep slopes in cassava fields in Nigeria, losses have been measured at 220 tons per year. In parts of Jamaica, 400 tons a year.

There is more than soil that is lost. In a hectare of good farm soil there is likely to be a ton of earthworms, a ton of arthropods, two tons of bacteria, algae and protozoa and more than two tons of fungi all of which recycle the nutrients so that plants can use them. Erosion at this rate is already hitting productivity.

But this year a group of scientists at Stanford university in California looked at the global balance sheet and discovered something even more alarming. Humanity — which has increased from one billion to almost 6 billion in 200 years — may soon be running out of water. Most of the fresh water on the planet is tied up in the polar icecaps and glaciers, or deep in the ground. All terrestrial life on

the planet relies on the stuff that evaporates, falls as rain, and either gets taken up by plants or runs off into the sea again. The Stanford team found two things. One is that humans — and their crops, farm animals and forestry plantations — were already using one fourth of all the water taken up by plants in a process called evapotranspiration. The other 10 million or more species on the planet — had to share what was left.

Given that there is a limit to water supplies, topsoil, energy and fertilisers, there is only one route left. This is in genetic engineering: taking useful genes from one variety or even species and transferring them to another. Scientists are already doing this to make crops more pest resistant, or disease resistant, or frost resistant, and there is a huge worldwide hunt for genes which can be transferred from arid-zone or salt-marsh plants into crop plants to make them grow in wasted soils. But there is a catch: in order to provide food for a swelling global population, farmers have been selecting only the most efficient varieties, and settlers

have been clearing wild regions to create new farmland. This means that old varieties and wild species of plants are disappearing everywhere — and these wild plants and primitive cultivars are just the plants most likely to hold the genes scientists have been looking for.

Finally, agronomists are left with the pressures of growth itself. As nations like China industrialise, the amount of farmland available dwindles. As living standards in China rise, tastes change. The Chinese, too, want beef and beer. So grain prices rise. But beef may soon be a thing of the past for most people. Right now the US diet is made up of 31 per cent animal products. With even a 1.1 per cent annual population growth rate, the number of mouths to feed in the US will double by 2050. Right now, each American has 1.6 acres of cropland to feed him or her — and provide \$155 (£100) worth of food exports each year. By 2050, each American will have to live off 0.6 acres per capita. The US diet by then will be 85 per cent vegetarian.

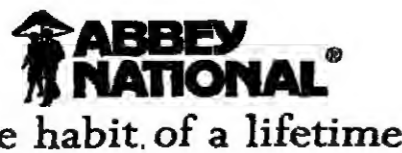
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Superstore market forces offer mixed blessings

Roger Cove

THE relentless advance of the supermarket over the past 20 years has transformed the way we buy food, and the food we buy.

For the better, the store chains argue, but there are plenty of critics who say that the superficial attraction of greater choice and consistency has been far outweighed by the side effects of superstore dominance.

That dominance is undisputed. Superstore openings have declined since 1991 as planning permission has become more difficult to obtain. But there are now more than 1,000 of these huge edge-of-town grocery temples, while the number of smaller shops has continued to decline.

The top four companies, Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda and Safeway, now take almost 50p out of every £1 we spend on groceries. Since they also sell petrol, medicines, stationery and many other non-grocery items, this understates their power in determining what we eat and drink.

Critics such as Hugh Raven, formerly of the Safe food alliance, argue that such power has become malign. "Supermarkets did deliver consumer benefits when they were only available to a few of us, but as soon as they became predominant they ceased to be beneficial," he said.

The main criticisms are not aimed at the food on the shelves, but at the way it gets there and the impact superstore dominance has had on society. It is arguable that the rise of supermarket power has been beneficial for the eating habits of most people and for the overall quality of food. The best local markets are bound to be better than any mass retailer, but mass retailers are likely to ensure higher standards of food safety and probably higher quality food than most small shops and market operators.

There is also a beneficial aspect of supermarket power which is often missed in focusing solely on the relationship between shop and shopper. The rise of the retailer has provided a counter-

weight to the power of the food manufacturers and suppliers who used to dictate what we ate. For example, supermarket buyers have the power to set and monitor high standards. They have been able to attack additives in processed food much more effectively than consumer

powerful and have possibly outlived their usefulness." Superstore dominance has destroyed local shopping centres, making it difficult for those without a car, but the main complaint is about the less obvious by-products of superstore growth.

Mass buying power has transformed British farming, and critics blame the supermarket buyers for the disappearance of traditional products and many small growers, as well as a concentration on uniform appearance rather than taste and texture.

While mass buying favours factory farming, national distribution systems are also blamed for an increase in food transport and thus pollution.

Supermarket operators dispute all these arguments. They claim there are adequate bus services to most edge-of-town sites, and pride themselves on efficient distribution systems and recycling activities.

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industry. Here, Guardian writers look to the future, and why we may have to change what we eat and the way we eat it

Idle farmers reap benefit of 'bizarre' EU subsidies

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

There can be no other trade that guarantees an income for doing nothing — and pays so well whether or not you are good at your job. That popular image of the modern farmer being featherbedded by the taxpayer is true — except for the smallest farmers in the least favoured areas who most need the money.

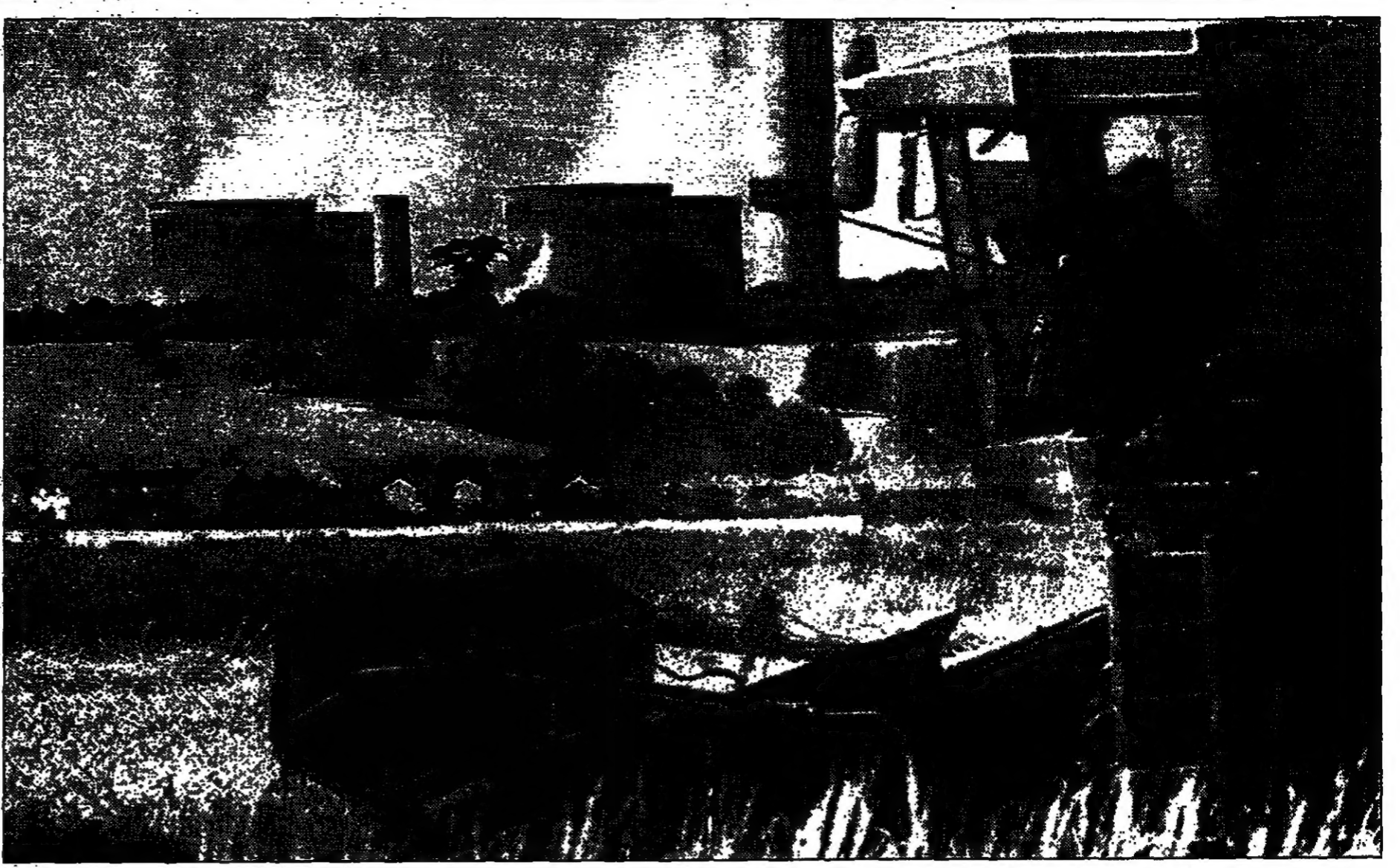
Despite the current BSE problem, most farmers are laughing all the way to the bank thanks to the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy and the Government's handling of the economy. As a result the price of farmland is soaring, and now fetches around £5,600 a hectare (2.5 acres) in East Anglia — £2,300 more than in 1992.

One of the many bizarre aspects of the subsidy system is that intensive farming, using most fertiliser and artificial aids to production, is being most highly rewarded. Farmers in most need of society's help to stay in business — those farming organically or hill farmers who also safeguard the countryside — are least likely to be generously treated. It is this aspect of the system that critics believe is behind the BSE crisis, offering as it does the temptation to use unnatural methods to boost production.

economic Community was to encourage food self-sufficiency. The EEC therefore guaranteed prices for farmers' products even if there was a surplus or imports would be cheaper — with the result that every available piece of land was used and intensive methods grew. Wheat, beef, butter and grain mountains resulted, the surpluses were off-loaded to Russia and elsewhere at a huge loss to the taxpayer. Reform of the policy became inevitable when the United States objected to its export markets being undercut by these massive subsidies.

The result was a 1992 reform which meant farmers were guaranteed a much lower price for their grain, but got a subsidy for each hectare of land planted. The subsidy was higher for crops in which the EU was not self-sufficient, so peas and beans attracted higher subsidies than grain. In addition, where there was surplus of a particular crop a percentage of the land used to grow it was not planted at all. This was called set-aside, and farmers got paid for doing nothing with that land.

The exception was livestock, where payments per head of cattle or sheep were maintained — although a cap was put on the total payment per hectare in a vain attempt to stop overstocking. Added to this, when Britain left the Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992 farm subsidies rose dramatically as sterling's 30 per cent devaluation meant subsidies (paid in ecu) rose by the same amount. At the same time global grain harvests were hit by adverse weather, demand increased and prices rose dramatically.



Cash crop... Harvesting in Nottinghamshire, where EU subsidies foster intensive methods and the Government fears taxpayers finding out what is really going on. PHOTOGRAPHY: DON MCPHIE

A farmer's life

Subsidies for livestock and growing crops, 1995

Crops		Livestock	
	£ per hectare		£ per head
Cereals	289.16	Cows	221.26
Oilseeds	466.76	Beef	221.26
Peas & beans	388.80	Sheep	221.26
Linseed	528.61		
Set aside	340.84		

In some areas, beef cattle get a subsidy of £83 a head; sheep get £21.26 a head, or up to £27 in less favourable areas. But it is arable farmers who really do well: for growing wheat or barley they get an EU subsidy of £283.16 per hectare; for oilseeds such as rape they get £466.76; and for peas and beans, £388.80. The highest payment, of £528.61, is for linseed. All that is before the farmer sells the crop — because he or she pockets that money too. But if it cannot be sold, or the price falls below a certain level, the EU buys it anyway. But let us not forget set-aside. The EU now wants 10 per cent of grain-growing

EU beef cash gamble

Meat trade rejects Brussels buy-up and banks on home market revival

Barbie Duttler

The British meat industry was reluctant to part with its beef yesterday, despite a European Commission offer to buy thousands of tonnes to cushion the market slump caused by BSE. As figures were released showing an increase in beef sales, the Federation of Fresh Meat Wholesalers said it made no sense to sell top-quality beef into storage. The EC has offered to buy 50,000 tonnes of European beef this month at £220 per 100 kilos. Only 140 tonnes have been offered by British meat traders, while Germany is selling some 4,000 tonnes.

Fresh Meat Wholesalers, said the possibility of more than half the beef supplies being taken out of the system would leave the country short. A spokesman for the National Farmers Union said it was astonishing and disappointing that the take-up from Britain is so low. The EU's beef management committee was yesterday also considering Britain's request for higher compensation payments for the slaughter of prime cattle. European Unity or Bye Bye Brussels? Tory MPs Edwina Currie and Tony Marlow are the guests of Vincent Hanna in the third Guardian Live Wire debate on the Internet tomorrow night from 6pm-8pm. Log on to <http://www.guardian.co.uk> or send advance questions to livewire@guardian.co.uk

The decision, which marked the opening of EU beef stores for the first time in two years, aims to reassure farmers they can still get a fair price for their beef even if the BSE scare causes the market to collapse. But the low take-up rate by British farmers and processors indicates they hope the market will revive and provide a better return than the commission. Figures released yesterday by the market information firm Nielsen showed beef sales rose in the Easter shopping week and were running at more than 6 per cent ahead of the previous week's levels. Peter Scott, general secretary of the Federation of

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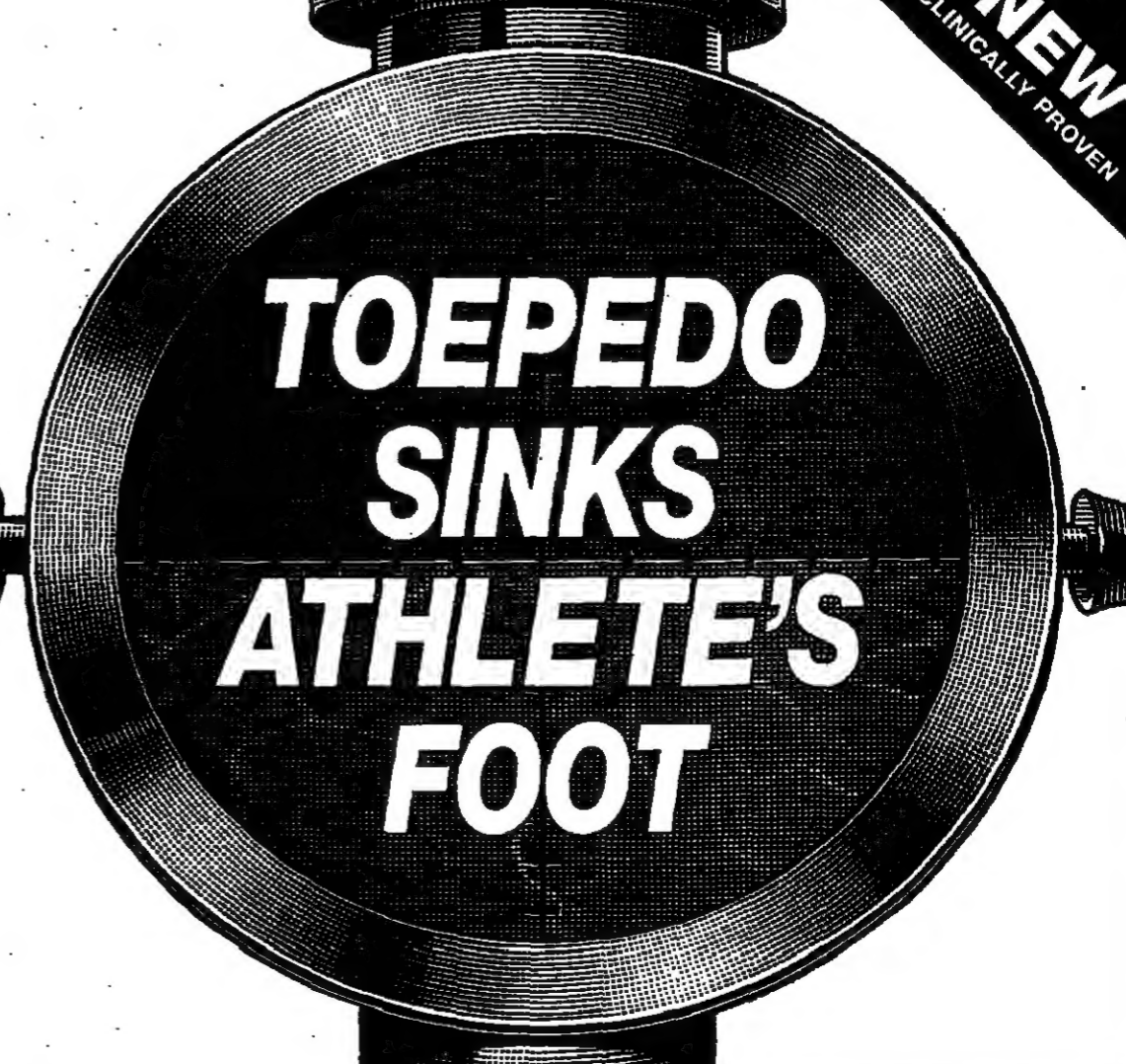
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Civilians in front line of grim cross-border attrition

Hizbullah defiant in face of barrage

Derek Brown
in Kiryat Shmona

ISRAELI warplanes and helicopters hurtled over the border with Lebanon last night, pressing home the assault on suspected Hizbullah positions.

At the eastern end of the twisting frontier, there was an almost continuous rumble of heavy artillery barrages. Visiting the border, Israel's prime minister, Shimon Peres, warned that the military campaign would continue — and made no bones about who would suffer most.

Unless the Lebanese government will be in a position to take charge of the situation in south Lebanon, the cost of the lack of order will be paid, alas, by the people of Lebanon, Mr Peres said.

But as Israel extends its doctrine of collective punishment — which is already the dominant factor in the Palestinian occupied territories — the people of Galilee are also continuing to pay a price for the deadly confrontation.

Yesterday morning, a salvo of Katyusha rockets slammed into Kiryat Shmona, the border town which has taken the brunt of Hizbullah attacks. Four civilians were wounded, one a woman whose car took a direct hit.

In a housing estate where one of the rockets fell, causing moderate damage, residents said defiantly they would never leave the town. But as they spoke, a family just across the road was stuffing plastic bags into an already packed car in preparation for immediate flight.

Already, about half of Kiryat Shmona's 25,000 people have fled. The rest spend their days — as well as their nights — in bomb shelters.

Some were in a defiant mood. "Peres, we want a war, we want a war," a young man yelled while the Israeli leader surveyed a burnt-out car.

Mr Peres had little cheer to offer the deserted and deserted town during yesterday's visit, three hours after the rocket attack.

He said the government was not surprised by the latest development — that was why the people had been

'As long as it is necessary. I'm not going to predict'

The Israeli prime minister, Shimon Peres, asked how long Israel would pursue operations in Lebanon.

'Peres is acting now as if elections are more important than peace'

Syrian state-run radio

'This vicious circle of killing will never end'

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri.

'We don't know who will give us shelter or feed us. No one is left in our village'

Hamzah, a Shi'ite Muslim driving a small van packed with 35 relatives

ordered into the shelters. Mr Peres warned that if Hizbullah thought Kiryat Shmona was an inviting target, then Beirut could become an even more inviting one.

"We have missiles that are better than Katyushas," the Israeli prime minister said. Later, more Katyusha barrages landed inside Israel, in the central and western Galilee districts, clearly signalling that Hizbullah is neither intimidated nor weakened by Israel's mighty firepower.

Last night, as darkness fell, yet more Katyushas fell in western Galilee, in the Galilee panhandle and in the Lebanese border town of Marjayoun, the headquarters of Israel's client militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

The grim confrontation is increasingly reminiscent of Operation Accountability in July 1993, when, in the space of a week, 26,000 Israeli bombs, shells and other missiles rained down on south Lebanon, killing about 130 civilians and driving out at least a quarter of a million refugees.

The campaign led to a United States-brokered understanding between Israel and Hizbullah in which both sides undertook not to target civilians. Now the unwritten

compact is in shreds — with both sides accusing the other of unprovoked attacks.

Israel's army commander, Lieutenant-General Amnon Shahak, told reporters in Kiryat Shmona yesterday that the aim of the present operation was to make it clear to Hizbullah that its recent actions were unacceptable.

Asked if the assault was a replay of Operation Accountability, Gen Shahak replied ominously: "Nothing will be exactly the same and nothing will be exactly different."

The general stressed that the residents of the villages targeted yesterday had been given due warning and time to escape. Another military source suggested that thousands of families had chosen to move south, into the swathe of Lebanese territory occupied by Israel with the help of the SLA.

A spokesman for the United Nations forces in south Lebanon, Unifil, dismissed the claim as "preposterous".

The Unifil spokesman said that the officer in charge of the well-guarded crossing points into the occupation zone had reported just one family opting for the dubious protection of Israel.

Martin Woolcott, page 14



Cheerless... Israel's prime minister, Shimon Peres, visits the embattled border town of Kiryat Shmona yesterday, hours after another Hizbullah attack. PHOTOGRAPH: YARON KAMENETZ

News in brief

Kantor chosen to succeed Brown

PRESIDENT Clinton yesterday named Mickey Kantor, the United States trade representative, as his new commerce secretary. He succeeds Ron Brown who died in a plane crash in Croatia last week. He said he would send Mr Kantor's name to Congress immediately, though it was unclear whether the appointment needs Senate confirmation.

Charlene Barshefsky, the deputy trade representative, is to be acting trade representative. She has received widespread praise in the past three years for negotiating trade deals with Japan and China.

Mr Kantor's efforts to seal 21 trade deals with Japan, including a politically sensitive car-agreement negotiated last summer, won him high praise from Mr Clinton, an old friend, Mr Kantor, who was chairman of Mr Clinton's 1992 campaign, had hoped to be his chief of staff and took the trade job after being passed over. — *Reuters, Washington*

Peace talks in Monrovia

SENIOR mediators from Ghana held talks in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, yesterday in an effort to halt the fighting and looting in the city, delegates said.

The delegation met representatives of the leaders of the main warring factions, members of the transitional ruling council, United Nations officials and members of the West African peace-keeping force, Ecomog. Witnesses said shelling of the Barclay Training Centre, the army barracks where gunmen loyal to Roosevelt Johnson, the Krahn militia leader, are holed up, subsided late yesterday morning.

Ecomog said yesterday its forces had secured a route between the US embassy and its base to facilitate the US airlift of civilians to Freeport and Delair. More than 800 people have been flown out so far. — *Reuters, Monrovia*

Abiola appeals to UN mission

NIGERIA'S detained opposition leader, Moshood Abiola, urged a visiting United Nations delegation in the capital Abuja yesterday to help secure his release. Kofi Annan, head of the mission, said: "We met with Abiola and other detainees Femi Falana and Gani Fawehinmi. Of course they asked for our help in their release."

The UN officials met Nigeria's military ruler, General Sani Abacha, in his presidential villa in Abuja on Thursday. Sources close to the team said allegations of human rights abuses were raised. — *Reuters, Lagos*

Ciller faces corruption charge

TURKEY'S main opposition Islamist Welfare Party is pushing for Taner Ciller, the former prime minister, to be impeached on corruption charges in a move that could split the now conservative coalition, Islamists said yesterday.

The party asked parliament on Thursday to debate claims of improper dealings by Mrs Ciller during attempts to privatise the car company Tofas, Necati Celik, a senior party member, said. Parliament will decide on April 24 whether to debate impeaching Mrs Ciller on other allegations by Islamists that she failed to prevent \$47 million (\$31.3 million) losses in a contracts auction organised by a state-run electricity company.

A senior member of Mrs Ciller's True Path Party said lack of support by Mesut Yilmaz, the prime minister, could break the coalition. — *Reuters, Ankara*

Disney targets Notre-Dame

WALT DISNEY wants to turn the gardens around Notre-Dame into a temporary theme park featuring a popular medieval village, it was revealed by Le Figaro newspaper yesterday.

Under the plan, which is being considered by Paris City Council, the park around the Gothic cathedral would be turned into a medieval city where tourists would be entertained by actors dressed as Quasimodo and Esmeralda — the main characters in the forthcoming Hunchback of Notre-Dame film. The promotion, lasting three months from July, would end on September 25 with a European premiere of the film on giant screens around the cathedral.

French historians reacted with fury. "It would be a massacre," said Yvonne Reges, president of the Association for the Protection of Notre-Dame. A spokesman for the city council confirmed the plan was under consideration. "Meetings are taking place but no decision has been taken," said the spokesman, who was not able to confirm how much Buena Vista, the Disney subsidiary producing the film, was offering to pay. — *Alex Daval Smith, Paris*



Follow my leader... Cordelia Grayson, a dancer with the Golden Highsteppers of the Memphis housing authority, leads the way for Robert Dole, the Republican presidential nominee, at a campaign lunch in the city on Thursday

Effort to isolate Serb leaders

DONOR states putting together \$1.2 billion (\$750 million) to reconstruct Bosnia sought ways to help the Bosnian Serbs while isolating their hardline leaders in Brussels yesterday.

Commitments to cover Bosnia's 1996 reconstruction needs started pouring in, but the refusal of the Bosnian Serb leadership to attend made it difficult to ensure the Bosnian Serb people would enjoy any peace dividend soon.

"We want to reach out to the ordinary people — they are not guilty of war crimes but their leaders are," said Carl Bildt, the United Nations High Representative in Bosnia. — *AP, Brussels*

'Impure' correspondence

THE discipline and ideological purity of China's army is being contaminated by soldiers' pen-palships, the Liberation Army Daily newspaper said yesterday.

"The army is a high-level, focused, uniformed group which emphasises unified discipline and strict management. There are many disadvantages to soldiers having pen-friends," said the newspaper, the mouthpiece of the People's Liberation Army. It said soldiers — mostly fresh-faced youths from the country — are easily misled about the possibilities of romance or of seeing the world through correspondence.

"Some soldiers become bored and dissatisfied and blindly think that the outside world is exciting," it said. — *Reuters, Beijing*

Having recently suffered the loss of a cherished but — it has to be admitted — sorely abused hamster, I can honestly say that death remains the great mystery it always has.
Suzanne Moore

Outlook page 15

Fugitive banker accuses Venezuela of vendetta

Caracas is pursuing a former financier in the US courts, writes Phil Gunson

FORMER millionaire Orlando Castro, once lauded as an exemplary businessman in his adopted homeland of Venezuela, is now cooling his heels in a Miami jail, along with his son and grandson.

The case against the three, involving \$55 million (£35 mil-

lion) of alleged fraud and grand larceny, could hold the key to future prosecutions of fugitive Venezuelan bankers who fled the country after the 1984 banking collapse.

"This is just the first step," says Venezuela's solicitor-general Jesus Pettit da Costa, who took the unusual deci-

sion a year ago to approach the Manhattan district attorney in an attempt to use US courts to prosecute the Castro family — one-time owners of Banco Progresso.

According to Mr Pettit, the Venezuelan government has paid \$1 billion in compensation since the bank folded in December 1984.

It is a big slice of the \$7 billion cost of the banking debacle, in which a total of 18 banks went under and had to be nationalised as a result of sharp practice and lax regulation.

As many as 200-300 former Venezuelan bankers suspected of illegal activities may be living in the United States. Others are thought to be in Madrid.

But although around 100 are the subject of legal proceedings, there is little hope of prosecuting them in Venezuela and extradition is, according to the solicitor-general's office, "almost impossible" within the existing legal framework.

"Honestly, I have to say it's more effective" to use the US courts, says Joaquin Chafardet, who worked on the strategy along with Mr Pettit.

"An abuse of the US justice system," retorts Richard Sharpstein, Mr Castro's attorney, who claims the Venezuelan authorities are pursuing a political vendetta.

As an immigrant who fled Cuba in 1961, Mr Castro was always an outsider in the Caracas elite who blocked his bid to join the country club.

Instead of financing the campaign of Venezuela's president Rafael Caldera, Mr Cas-

tro gave money to his rivals, including the candidate of the leftwing Cause Radical party.

But his biggest mistake seems to have been to carry out allegedly illegal banking transactions via New York, thereby laying himself and his family open to prosecution in Manhattan — provid-

ing the very best thing you could do for the Castros," scoffs economic and political analyst Toby Bottoms. "That way they'd get tangled up in legalisms and get off scot-free."

Moreover, as a 70-year-old, Orlando Castro would be entitled under Venezuelan law to house arrest rather than imprisonment.

"It wasn't the intention [to have them expelled]," says Mr Chafardet, who admits to the limitation of the Venezuelan system.

What is not certain, however, is how many other banking fraud cases could be dealt with in this way.

In total, Orlando Castro is charged with misappropriating over \$2 billion in attempts to prop up his ailing banks and maintain his family's jet-set lifestyle.

Those fugitive bankers whose alleged misdeeds took place within Venezuela may yet escape the law.

In the meantime Orlando Castro — who once owned a ranch five times the size of Miami — has no choice but to stare at the four walls of the Dade County jail.

As a 70-year-old, Orlando Castro would be entitled under Venezuelan law to house arrest

ing that the Miami courts agree on May 3 to their extradition.

Some see the operation as a disguised attempt to have the Castros sent back to face charges in Venezuela, an accusation the solicitor-general's office denies.

According to one exiled banker, "the US government could use this case as an excuse to withdraw Castro's visa". That, however, "would

Student leader shot dead in Baltimore campus feud

Ian Katz in New York

ONE OF America's most prestigious universities was in shock yesterday after a feud between two Republican student politicians ended in a fatal shooting on the Baltimore campus.

Rex Chao, aged 19, was killed moments after being elected president of the Johns Hopkins Republican Club. His killer, Robert Harwood Jr, aged 22, was a former president of the club who had sought to block Mr Chao's appointment.

Mr Harwood, who had already completed his chemistry degree, was arrested by a campus security guard moments after the shooting with a .357 Magnum hidden in his coat. He has been charged with first degree murder. The killing comes less than a year after a Harvard student stabbed her room-mate to death then hanged herself.

The existence of a feud between Mr Chao and Mr Harwood was well known on the Johns Hopkins campus. It is reported to have begun approximately a year ago when Mr Chao broke off his friendship with Mr Harwood.

"He [Mr Harwood] definitely has been acting very weird lately," said Neil Sander, a friend of Mr Chao's. "He'd been harassing Rex. He made a lot of nasty phone calls to him, sent a lot of obscene e-mail messages."

"After both men lodged complaints, Mr Harwood, who has been living in Rhode Island, agreed to notify college authorities when he visited the campus. He is understood to have done so before Wednesday's Republican Club meeting.

At the meeting, Mr Harwood reportedly tried hard to block Mr Chao's election, handing out leaflets with derogatory comments about his former friend.

When he failed to derail Mr Chao's bid for the club presidency, police say he followed him from the meeting, shooting him once in the head and then in the chest as he lay on the ground.

"Our entire university community is deeply wounded by the events of last night," said Daniel Nathans, interim college president. "It's clearly one of the most terrible occurrences in the history of the university."

Police did not say what originally prompted the split between the two. Mr Chao, a gifted violinist, had served as a intern in the office of the New York Republican congresswoman, Susan Mollinari.

His mother, Rosetta Chao, spoke to him just before the meeting to wish him luck. She said: "Music and politics were his love. I hate politics. I told him that, but it was something he wanted."

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صوتنا من الاعمال

Ten years on, the legacy of the reactor disaster at Chernobyl is still with us. DAVID FAIRHALL looks at the continuing dangers posed by crumbling Soviet-era power plants and, right, at the children paying the tragic price of the 1986 accident



Covered up... Volunteer 'liquidators' wore protective clothing to clean up the debris from the 1986 Chernobyl explosion, but two of the plant's reactors are still in service despite successive closure deadlines

Deadly shadow hangs over Europe

TEN years after Chernobyl, 27 other power station reactors of the same Soviet design, or of an equally dubious vintage, are still threatening nuclear disaster.

A Western campaign to shut them down by political threats, financial bribes and humanitarian appeals has failed to secure a single closure. Next weekend's nuclear summit in Moscow of the G7 group of industrialised countries plus Russia, far from giving impetus to the closure campaign, is expected, in effect, to endorse its failure.

At Chernobyl, the scene of the April 1986 explosion, just a few miles north of the Ukrainian capital Kiev, the prospect is peculiarly bleak. Against all early expectations, two of the station's remaining RBMK reactors are still in operation, surrounded by miles of deserted, heavily contaminated countryside. Radioactive elements slowly leach into the ground water — and hence into Kiev's drinking supply — from more than 600 pits where the most dangerous debris was buried 10 years ago.

Here, as elsewhere, successive closure deadlines have passed with no locally acceptable economic alternative in sight. The latest promise, to close Chernobyl's Number 1 and 3 reactors in the year 2000, was made at an Ottawa conference last December. Many believe they will nevertheless run on until 2015. Meanwhile, the makeshift concrete "sarcophagus" protecting the melted ruins of the Number 4 reactor badly needs reinforcement. Building a new shroud will cost billions of dollars the Ukrainians do not have and the G7 countries show little sign of providing.

The past 10 years have seen a process of mutual disillusionment. Talk of closure has given way to a less aggressive policy of 'co-operation'.

There is also a suspicion that Western aid is being diverted into private bank accounts.

Some safety improvements funded through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) are quietly under way in Russia and Lithuania, which operates two RBMK Chernobyl-type reactors. But European firms have been warned by their lawyers that unless the Moscow summit produces concrete assurances on accident liability — which seems unlikely since Russia is still arguing with Ukraine and Belarus about who should pay for Chernobyl — they should beware of deeper involvement. They could be liable for compensation in the event of another disaster.

Three years ago, the Munich G7 summit called for all 15 RBMK reactors to be shut down. The summit's German hosts were particularly vociferous. They had, after all, closed five former East German, Soviet-designed VVER pressurised-water reactors after reunification, even though they could technically have been brought up to Western standards. But since Munich, even in environmentally sensitive Germany, talk of closure has given way to a less aggressive policy of "co-operation".

That too has produced few results. Take the Slovakian example. A deal had apparently been struck with French and German companies to upgrade and complete a pair of VVER-213 reactors at Mochovce, using \$1 billion (€820 million) of EBRD credit. In return for a promise to close two obsolete VVER-230s at Bohunice. But when the Slovaks looked at the sums, they calculated that electricity prices would have to rise by 25 per cent to pay for the scheme. Instead, they turned to the Russians for a much smaller \$100 million loan plus their technical assistance, and gave the engineering contracts to Slovakia.

Bulgaria produced another Western disappointment. French engineers were helping to upgrade the Kozloduy station, which has four 1960s-vintage VVER-230s. Under the terms of a European Union aid agreement, the Number 1 reactor pressure vessel should have been checked for embrittlement before restarting it last year. But with winter coming on, the Bulgarians said they could not wait. The French advisers pulled out in disgust.

One of the few reassuring

messages the International Atomic Energy Agency's experts are sending to the Moscow summit is that an exact repetition of the 1986 accident at Chernobyl is almost inconceivable. Everyone in the business now knows why it happened. Operating procedures have been tightened. Detailed physical modifications have been made (although the Ukrainian station, short of cash and isolated from Russia, is at the end of the queue for these) and the older RBMK reactors are only licensed for a year at a time.

However, after last week's International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in Vienna to consider the status of the graphite-moderated reactors, Prof Birkhofer warned that there was a residual risk of a multiple fuel channel block-



Source: Nuclear Engineering International GRAPHIC: STEVE WALLACE, DAVID FAIRHALL

Funds are sought for cancer battle

GERMANY'S environment and nuclear safety minister has appealed for funds to treat the 800 children with thyroid cancer from the areas most badly contaminated by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster 10 years ago.

Speaking after a conference in Vienna about the aftermath of the disaster, Angela Merkel said the amount needed to treat the affected children would be a relatively small total of €30,000, compared to the billions needed for the safe decommissioning of the Chernobyl power station.

The conference heard that many more cases are expected to appear among people in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia living downwind of the exploded reactor.

The final total among those aged three or less at the time is expected to be between 4,000 and 8,000. Not all those affected will die — probably one in 10 — but the survivors will require lifelong treatment.

The five-day conference — organised jointly by the European Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organisation, was chaired by Ms Merkel.

It heard that the makeshift concrete "sarcophagus" protecting the burnt-out reactor Number 4 at Chernobyl contains 200 tonnes of mixed nuclear fuel and irradiated debris, mainly in the form of dust. This could go critical if it comes into contact with water, scattering fresh radioactivity over the immediate surroundings — although not to the scale of the contamination which resulted from the 1986 disaster itself.

This even reached Britain 1,000 miles away, as wind-blown radioactive dust was washed down by rain over western hills. A decade on, hundreds of square miles of sheep pasture in north Wales, Cumbria, central and south-western Scotland, are still contaminated and subject to restrictions. Three hundred thousand sheep are affected, and have to be checked for excessive radioactivity before they can be eaten.

In Vienna, the conference heard that while hundreds of thyroid cancer cases apparently caused by Chernobyl had been confirmed, the incidence of leukaemia was much less than expected. "The scientists have been surprised by this," said the IAEA's spokesman, David Kyd.

An extra 200 cases of leukaemia were forecast among the 300,000 "liquidators" who cleared up after the 1986 explosion — but they have not yet appeared.

Scientists speculated that while young children were extremely vulnerable to radiation, healthy adults might be less vulnerable than was supposed.

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Petty theft main threat

Pilfering — not terrorism — is fuelling fears about loose controls on nuclear material, reports Carol Williams in Moscow

WHEN curiosity got the better of three railway station workers in the Georgian port of Kutaisi last month, they broke open airtight containers that had languished for years at their depot.

Two days later, they were rushed to a hospital with radiation poisoning, having exposed themselves to nuclear waste — again reminding the world of doubts about the control of hazardous substances in the former Soviet Union.

Another radiation-emitting container was found in a manhole that same week in Izobilny, southern Russia. The incident rekindled worries in the nervous region neighbouring the Caucasus that Chechen separatists might seek to use such substances in retaliation for Russia's war in the republic.

Reactor fuel rods have been stolen from nuclear submarines of Russia's Northern Fleet at least twice. Police seizures of plutonium and enriched uranium around Europe suggest both go missing from Russian facilities at an alarming rate.

Nuclear agencies say Russia and its neighbours are less at risk of an organised attempt by terrorists or rogue governments to obtain nuclear weapons than they are vulnerable to petty theft by underpaid workers.

Atomic energy experts warn that colleagues now have the opportunity and incentive to cash in on what they believe is an international market in nuclear material.

The persistent security woes surrounding Russia's nuclear weapons and reactors are likely to be a key theme at this month's gathering in Moscow of the leaders of the Group of Seven countries, including the United States president, Bill Clinton.

But those involved in preparing for the nuclear security summit next Friday are expressing disappointment that it is shaping up to be less directed at enhancing security than at the re-election chances of Mr Clinton and Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin.

With the US congress increasingly reluctant to help pay to make Russia safer, the latter's poorly guarded plants and institutes are likely to remain attractive targets.

"There are 900kg (1,980lb) of plutonium at the Obninsk institute — in theory, this would be enough to produce 200 atomic weapons," says Igor Sutyagin, a nuclear security analyst in Moscow.

But Mr Sutyagin insists that, so far, the hazards are only theoretical. Most cases of theft involve uranium of a quality too low for weapons, and instances involving more dangerous materials showed that the thieves were unable to find a buyer.

Yuri Volodin of the nuclear safety authority, Gosatomnadzor, concedes that Russia must develop a reliable system for the control and accounting of its huge stockpiles of plutonium and enriched uranium, and improve security. But he acknowledges funding is unlikely to be found soon.

Mr Sutyagin fears that Russian risk becoming tolerant of theft. "An environment can be created where theft is commonplace, acceptable."

A US report last month estimated that 1,400 metric tons of bomb-making substances are stored in the former Soviet Union. Stocks are growing because plants in Tomsk continue to produce plutonium.

"To shut down the main source of employment in a city of 100,000 is a tall order," says Yuri Yershov, a physicist. — Los Angeles Times.

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Cricket

As another season makes its comic-cuts start Mike Selvey despairs as the world sniggers at our establishment approach to the game

England sidles into the spring ritual

THE WAY the first-class season whimpers into life reveals much about the approach to cricket in this country. Worthies they may well be but when the players of Oxford University and Leicestershire pull on their layers of sweaters and take the field at The Parks today, they will be enacting the English establishment's idea of the big kick-off. But while England re-enacts its annual spring ritual, the rest of the cricket world sniggers behind its back at the sheer anachronism of it all. On the other hand, the profile of the game here is so low in the wake of the latter part of the South Africa tour and the World Cup that a clandestine creep into the summer is perhaps all it deserves. Remarkably there are still

those in influential positions around the shires who believe that the ills of the English team are in no way a spin-off from an archaic domestic structure — of which, incidentally, university cricket is just a part — that brags about being the only professional circuit in the world while failing to recognise that where it really counts. In the Test match arena, England produce part-time internationals. England produce players, in fact, who when they represent their country are no more than cricketers on secondment when they should be at the pinnacle of their careers — surely what should be the main objective of the system. The battle between county and country has long been waged. On the one hand are those who argue vehemently that the very existence of county cricket, in an age of

pathetic local crowds, rides on the back of revenues created from the national side. It is in the counties' own interest — and therefore their duty, however self-sacrificial it may be — to focus the bulk of their energies into the success of the national side. Against that are those who believe, as far as the England team is concerned, that the current structure is adequate, providing enough players of sufficient calibre, and that it is at the level beyond their direct control that things tend to go wrong. Yet, whatever the views of the respective counties and their memberships, there is probably not one so revolutionary that it would advocate releasing top players from their contracts and for the Test and County Cricket Board to place them under contract instead, turning the part-timers into international professionals. In this regard, as in so many other areas, we lag behind other countries. Last winter, before the series against England, the United Cricket Board of South Africa announced that with its top players contracted to them (no professional circuit there, remember) they retained the power to withdraw such players from provincial matches if they deemed it in the international interest. So Allan Donald, lacking rhythm at the start of the series, was told not to play for Orange Free State against the England tourists and instead spent time with coaches and physiologists working towards getting things right. Similarly Brian McMillan was withdrawn from an important Western Provinces match. The provinces comply with this as national success is paramount. Much the same applies to the attitude over how South Africa's players spend the winter. So Shaun Pollock — young, enthusiastic and full of potential — has been encouraged to use the county game to hone his skills and his stamina while McMillan, at an age when he needs recovery time, was told to withdraw from a contract with Surrey. It is similar in Australia, where some players are directed towards county cricket while others — Shane Warne, for example, or Craig McDermott — have been discouraged. Both countries recognise the paramount needs of the international side. The upshot is that the top players in these countries benefit from a continuity and intensity of approach to playing, coaching, training and treatment that is denied English cricketers.

Instead England players are, in effect, on loan for the period of an international. Coaching time is limited, as is authority, and once back with the county outside influence effectively ends. Raymond Illingworth recognised the need for some further control if the team was to progress and during the winter he asked the counties for powers — similar to those exercised by the UCBSA — to insist that a player be rested from a county match if he felt it to England's advantage. Furthermore, he would have liked to have been able to say, perhaps, to Worcestershire that he would like Graeme Hick to bowl more overs of off-spin or to ask Middlesex to open the batting with Mark Ramprakash. But, although he insisted that it would not be a power he would abuse, it was predictable that the counties would turn him down. When the Afield Committee eventually files its report into the structure surrounding the England team, there could well be a recommendation that a pool of top players be given large Test and County Cricket Board contracts so that, once under TCCB control, they can be hired to their counties — a reverse of the current situation. Such a progressive move must be in the best interests of the national side and the players and, if that is the case, it should be in the interest of the counties as well. Yet the chances are minimal. Obstacles would be placed in the way. Who would choose the players? The members will object. Why should we bring youngsters on only to lose them? The counties, as ever, are the board and a cosy state of self-interest remains.



Illingworth... turned down. In truth, at county level the game, if left untouched in other areas, would potter along as before, with Blyths the international turning out regularly for Leamington unless his technique was shot and needed remedial treatment. And if he did not, then there would be few who would notice in any case. But if there were change, county cricket would survive at the same bland level cherished by those who try to block progress. England cricket, on which the counties' existence depends, would, however, have taken a giant step towards real professionalism and, perhaps, to a successful world.

The cynics' chorus will be heard again as Oxford and Cambridge take on the counties. Will Kendall bats for the universities

The finest finishing school of all

THE start of the season today, with Oxford University facing Leicestershire, will no doubt bring a chorus of complaint that Oxbridge cricket no longer deserves a place on the first-class fixture list. Cynics argue that such privileges are simply the result of sentiment and tradition. They are missing the point. Today's student players do not need to hark back to the days of Cowdrey, May and Dexter to vindicate their position. Mike Atherton, John Crawley and Jason Gallian are more recent examples of Oxbridge's importance as the best cricket nursery in the country. The universities cannot pretend to compete at the same level as full-time professionals but this has been the case for many years. Rather, they recognise that the chance to become involved in first-class cricket is vital to Oxford and Cambridge students with serious aspirations in the game. The motto "If they're good enough, they're old enough" is observed in the world of cricket. If such games did not exist, counties would fill their programmes with other fixtures which may be equally artificial and much less effective. The students themselves do not enter the games merely to make an impression and improve more rapidly from exposure to higher standards. Gregor MacMillan and Iain Sutcliffe are two to have benefited recently. Both now play championship cricket with



Seat of learning... Oxford play Northamptonshire at The Parks. Atherton, Crawley and Gallian are all Oxbridge alumni

est to send him back to the pavilion. They do, after all, sacrifice to five days a week to cricket, while being under constant pressure from tutors to keep up with their studies. Without the incentives of professionalism, the universities find their resolve in a desire to make the fixtures worthwhile and to enjoy them. The full-time influence of such experienced coaches as Lenham has clearly been beneficial, and this year's Cambridge side can only benefit from the knowledge and enthusiasm of their new coach, Derek Randall. Improvement is significant: only last year Sutcliffe and Chinnay Gupta took part in an Oxford record opening

stand of 385 against Hampshire, and Andrew Whittall took 10 wickets for Cambridge against Essex. The basis for first-class cricket at Oxbridge is established and proven. If it is destroyed school leavers will be faced with the stark choice between first-class cricket and higher education. More often than not, given modern

day expectations, cricket will come second. There is always room for improvement and moves are being made to strengthen Oxbridge squads still further through an admissions policy that is not suspicious of sportsmen. Gupta, the current Oxford captain, believes that the present squad is the best he has seen in his six years here, and Cambridge are considerably more experienced than in recent times. Oxbridge cricket is flourishing and should not be made a scapegoat for the troubles elsewhere in the English game. Will Kendall, an undergraduate at Keble College, Oxford, was the university's secretary of cricket last year.

Amiss gives Botham backing

THE Warwickshire chief executive Dennis Amiss yesterday added his voice to those backing Ian Botham's elevation into the England set-up. The former England batsman joined Derbyshire and Northamptonshire officials, who have nominated Botham to be a selector. Amiss said: "I believe Botham has got to be involved. Even if he wasn't able to be a selector, his sheer presence would be a huge benefit to the England players. "I've never seen an England team lacking so much confidence as the one at the end of the South Africa tour and in the World Cup. They are good players but need to have their confidence restored. We have got to get some young selectors who will bring fresh ideas — people who have not been so long out of the game. Robin Smith has pleaded with the chairman of selectors Ray Illingworth to be given an extended run in the problem No. 3 spot against India and Pakistan this summer. He said: "If I batted at three, then perhaps I would have the chance to go on and get the hundreds I'm looking for. The extra responsibility would do me good and I am ready for it." The Derbyshire fast bowler Devon Malcolm, who accused Illingworth of destroying his confidence on the tour of South Africa, has been told by the Test and County Cricket Board that no disciplinary action is to be taken against him for his comments in a newspaper article.

Ice Hockey

Clubs consider quick resolution

NEXT season could see sudden-death overtime and penalty shoot-outs to decide games tied at the end of regulation time if ideas being floated in Blackpool this weekend are approved. The British Ice Hockey League is being reorganised by the British National Ice Hockey League are adopted. The meeting has been sanctioned by the British Ice Hockey Association and invitations have gone to all major clubs outside the six committed to September's professional Superleague. It was the advent of the Superleague which led to the replacement of the British League by the BNHL. Finance will be the yardstick to determine membership of both the Premier and First Divisions. Former clubs needing at least £140,000 and First Division members £75,000. The BNHL, the sport's governing body, has allowed the BNHL to run its own affairs and negotiate TV and sponsorship rights.

Sports Betting

Why some wagers are best left to the last minute

KEEP Betting Live! Like most entertainments, betting is best enjoyed live. Until recently that pleasure, or the stress that sports punters like to think of as pleasure, was reserved for those who bet on the outcome of a game. RELEGATIONS: Three weeks ago the bookmakers thought they had at least two of the relegation places sewn up, with Bolton and QPR 1-30 and 1-10 for the drop. Since then both have shown signs of life and, with two points separating the bottom five, things look very interesting. IG and Sporting Index are both running Premiership exit markets, with IG offering better rewards for picking the survivors. On its system the team finishing bottom is awarded 0 points, followed by 10 points for the next worst, 25 for the third-bottom and 50 for the two who beat the drop. On that basis it rates Coventry at 33-38, Southampton 30-33, Manchester City 28-31, QPR 26-29 and Bolton 10-13. Despite their revival it is hard to see Bolton making it out of the bottom two. After that it is any two from four. Coventry and QPR, who meet today, start a point behind Manchester City and Southampton. Victory for either Coventry or Rangers will go a long way to securing safety, particularly for Ray Wilkins's team, who enjoy the best goal difference of the five.

Weekend fixtures

Table listing football fixtures for the weekend, including Premier League, First Division, and other leagues.

First Division

Table listing fixtures for the First Division, including teams like Arsenal, Liverpool, and Manchester United.

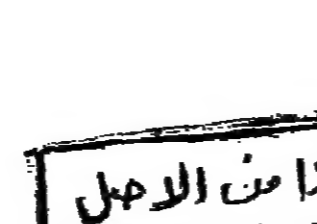
Second Division

Table listing fixtures for the Second Division, including teams like Blackburn, Derby, and Luton.

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE

Table listing fixtures for the GM Vauxhall Conference, including teams like Dover and Ayr.

RUGBY LEAGUE CUP FINAL WEMBLEY STADIUM Saturday 27th April. Includes ticket information and contact details.



Racing

Long trip to pay off for Avro Anson

NORTHERN stables should make the presence felt on a top quality jumping card at Ascot today. The going was good at last week's fixture and Maurice Camacho, the Malton-based trainer, will be praying conditions stay the same for Avro Anson in the Letheby & Christopher Long Distance Hurdle.

Beaten a head by Sweet Glow in this race two years ago, Avro Anson has shown his best form on a sound surface, although there was some give underfoot when he won the 1994 Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham. He subsequently had first prize taken away from him in the stewards' room.

Johnson takes a gamble with Direct Route (2.35) by running him in the Ladbrokes Handicap Hurdle instead of the concluding novices' event in which he had raced. Off his light weight, Direct Route looks capable of a bold bid against more seasoned campaigners. Winner of three bumper races, the five-year-old finished a long way clear of the remainder when second to the unbeaten Penny A Day in a hotly contested novice hurdle at Kelso last time.

Cochrane stars with double

RAY COCHRANE continued his fine start to the flat turf season with a 99-1 double at Brighton yesterday on Star Talent (10-1) and Bashful Brave (8-1).

The look of him much. The horse had breathing troubles and has to be held off until the very last minute - just as Ray did today. "It also helps that we have a gallop at home at Whitcombe, which is a replica of Brighton and Epsom with a stiff uphill finish.

In the Brighton Spring Handicap, the gelding was always prominent but did not hit the front until 75 yards, beating Speedy Classic by a head. Agwa broke the six furlong track record in the ante-post City of London Handicap, a Grade 2 race, when ridden by Seb Sanders, made all the running to score by two lengths from Bailey's Sunset.



Love tangle... Warrington's Kohn-Love is held by Moriarty in the early stages at Wilderspool

Super League: Warrington 16, Halifax Blue Sox 10

Wire survive screen test

TELEVISION evidence ruled out tries for Warrington at Wilderspool last night, but they still did enough to record their third Super League victory.

An interception try by Mark Forster six minutes into the second half changed the course of the contest after Halifax had appeared to be taking control.

been close but the ruling was no try. The second occasion came in the 28th minute after Halifax, on a rare visit to the Warrington 20-metre zone, worked the ball left via Moana and a clever flick on by Moriarty.

Seven minutes later Warrington put some real distance between themselves and Halifax with a second try. Two poor tackles cost the Blue Sox dear and Hanrahan showed the finishing skills which had earned him 12 tries in eight games for Carlisle.

Ascot card with guide to the form

Table with 2 columns: Race number and horse names with odds.

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Warwick programme

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Rugby League

Broncos miss bus and selection

TONY CURRIE, the London Broncos coach, yesterday dropped Leo Dynevor and Russell Bowden as a disciplinary measure, a courageous decision by a man who has already lost valued members of a limited squad to injury.

Dynevor and Bowden, who arrived 15 minutes late for training on Thursday, will be absent from the side to play Sheffield Eagles at Don Valley. "Their excuse that they missed the bus was pathetic," said Currie.

Kevin Skerrett, the Great Britain prop, will be the Wigan square for the match against Castleford at Weldon Road but the club confirmed yesterday that they are prepared to release him. Warrington are favourites to sign the 28-year-old forward, who, under the terms of his contract, would leave the club on a free transfer, as he left Bradford in 1990.

An unchanged Wigan will come up against their former record points scorer Frano Botica, who collected 1,931 points in five successful seasons at Central Park.

Head start THE Guinness trials at Ebury yesterday failed to throw up any serious threats to ante-post favourites Borsam or Alhambra in the Newmarket Classics.

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Josef Fischer, above, was the first winner of the Paris-Roubaix across the muddy and dung-coated cobbles of northern France. The German took nine hours to cover the 175 miles and won £130. Tomorrow is the centenary of L'Enfer du Nord



Hell hath no fury... competitors receive uniform and bowler-hatted encouragement as they ride the cobbles in 1920, the second running of the race after a break during the war

One hundred years since Hell began

William Fotheringham on the heroes and heartbreaks of the Queen of Classics

ASPECTACULAR, bumpy and painful two-wheeled birthday will be celebrated in northern France tomorrow: it is 100 years since the first Paris-Roubaix, the Queen of Classics or, for the 200 participants, the Hell of the North. Heroes have been made

with gas-pipe tubes and balloon tyres. The track is now a white elephant and the cloth industry has been decimated by recession. Yet Paris-Roubaix has a timeless quality and a unique place in cycling. After the First World War shelling on the cobbled tracks the race became known as *L'Enfer du Nord* even though it was hell before that with 30 miles of *paavé*. The 1981 winner Bernard Hinault said: "I detest this stupid race."

The first race left Porte Maillot in Paris after a special mass to atone for the fact that it was Easter Sunday: the winner, Josef Fischer of Germany, took nine hours to cover the 175 miles and received 1,000 Fr. The race's reputation for meeting out ill-luck to favourites was made when the leader Arthur Linton of Wales was brought down by a stray dog. Linton was the first of many to curse the perversity of "La Pascale". In 1927, after a dead heat, the judge first declared France's Joseph Curtel the winner, then awarded victory, without photographic evidence, to another rider. Three years later the Frenchman Jean Maréchal was disqualified from victory after he was accused of causing the rider placed second to crash: again there were no objective witnesses. Maréchal always considered himself the moral winner, as did Roger Lapébie, disqualified four years

later for borrowing a spectator's bike after puncturing. So too did Romain Maes, who was given second despite being the clear winner according to the photo finish in 1936. In 1989 Italy's Franco Ballerini circled the Velodrome with his arms raised in a victory salute after the announcer stated he had won a close sprint with Gilbert Duclos-Lassalle of France. Only when he returned to collect his bouquet was he told of the mistake. La Pascale is capricious: Duclos-Lassalle waited 12 years after coming second in 1980 before he took his first win in 1992 and Ballerini had five punctures and three crashes in the muddy, rain-hit race of 1994, but came back to win last year. Tomorrow Britain's Sean Yates will be hoping the good luck which has taken him to top-10 placings in the last two editions will hold for his swansong in the 162-mile event.

Sport in brief

British sailors poised

BEN AINSLIE scored an encouraging victory in the Laser world sailing championship in Falmouth yesterday. Simon Stone of Brazil was runner-up. He led the fourth race in South Africa from start to finish but, having finished 19th in the third, he dropped to third overall. In Percy, in the other half of the 135-boat fleet, also won his fourth race after finishing 20th in the third and the two Britons will be well placed when they discard their worst results, each having won two races. For the second successive day conditions were difficult, with huge seas running from the south but winds of only 15-20 knots. At times the wind shifted violently and one shift enabled the defending champion Robert Scheidt of Brazil to claw back seven places on the final leg of the fourth race to finish second behind Percy. Karl Sunesson (Sweden) heads the points table after four races but has yet to win one.

Cricket

Aamir Sohail scored 105 from 127 balls and Mushtaq Ahmed took four key wickets as Pakistan beat India by 38 runs in the opening match of the Sharjah Cup yesterday. Pakistan raced to 271 for five in their 50 overs and then bowled out India for 233.

Rugby League

The Widnes forward Andy Collier, sent off for a high tackle during his side's 40-14 defeat at Salford, has been fined for two matches and fined £75 by the RFL disciplinary committee, as has the Dewsbury prop Shayne Williams for the same offence in a 6-6 draw with Batley. The Leigh scrum-half Chris Wilkinson, given his marching orders against Swinton for kicking and stamping, received a two-match ban and a £50 fine.

Judo

When Kate Howey competes in the British Open in Birmingham today she will be the only member of the host's national team taking part; the others have left for Japan to prepare for next month's European Championships. Howey, who felt she needed international competition before the Europeans, flies to join them tomorrow.

Basketball

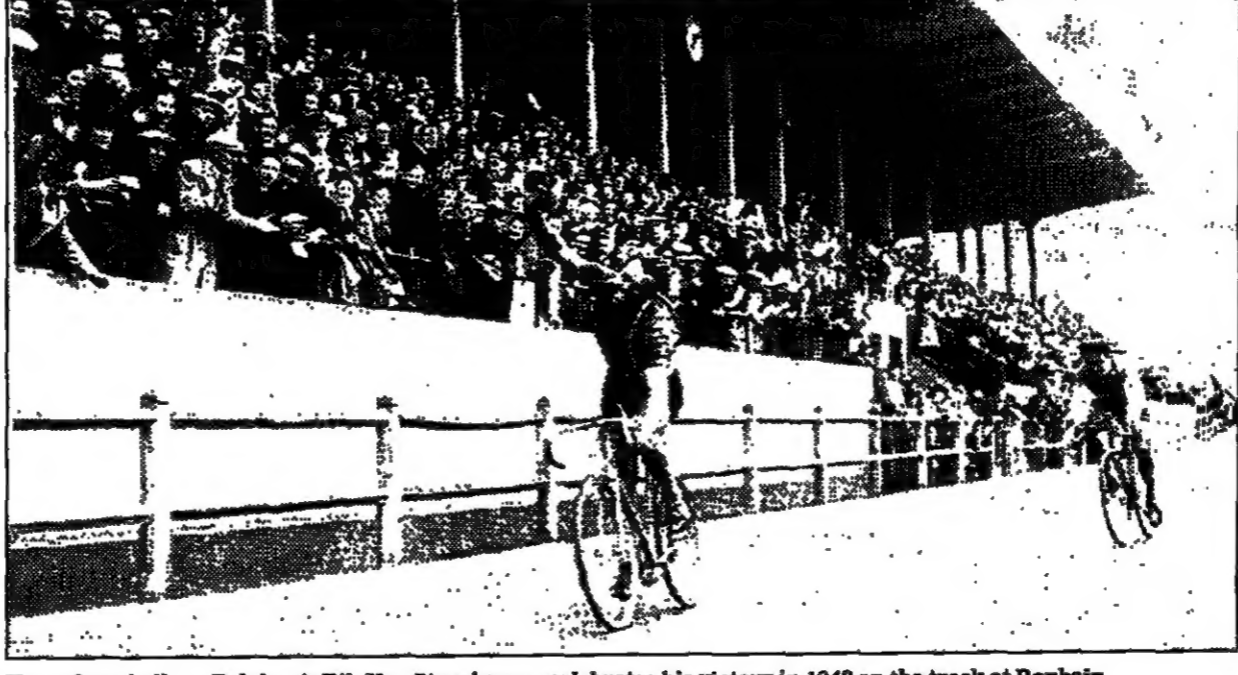
The International Federation has rejected an appeal by Barcelona against the refereeing in the European club championship final which they lost 67-58 to Panathinaikos.

Motorcycling

Carl Fogarty begins the defence of his world superbike championship in the San Marino round at Misano, Italy, tomorrow. The Lancastrian has joined the New Zealander Aaron Slight in the Castrol Honda team after winning the title on a Ducati last season.



The road to hell... Fischer, centre, in jacket and hat at the start of the 1896 race



Home from hell... Belgium's Rik Van Steenberghe celebrates his victory in 1948 on the track at Roubaix

Sedgefield (N.H.) runners and riders

Table listing horse racing results for Sedgefield (N.H.), including race numbers, names, and winners.

Wolverhampton all-weather card tonight

Table listing horse racing results for Wolverhampton all-weather track, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Newton Abbot (N.H.)

Table listing horse racing results for Newton Abbot (N.H.), including race numbers, names, and winners.

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Large advertisement for 'goa' featuring a woman's face and text: 'his month in goa THE FOOTBALL MONTHLY', 'KILGERN KLINSMANN', 'BOWLER & McMANUS', 'FREE', 'ON SALE NOW'.

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Newcastle must push their luck

Soccer
Martin Thorpe

KEVIN KEEGAN's dream headlines tonight would be: "Southampton rock United" and "Injured Cantona to miss title run-in". But then, knowing Newcastle's recent luck, they would probably go and lose at home to Aston Villa tomorrow.

Neither Saints, nor the proposed erection of a giant angel at nearby Gateshead, look capable of coming to Keegan's aid against the malevolent forces which seem to have gripped the club and mockingly turn their title hopes to pieces.

It struck again yesterday when the growing clamour for Keith Gillespie to start a game was silenced by a training accident which left the winger with a twisted ankle and doubtful for tomorrow.

Whatever the line-up, Newcastle must win, for a defeat coupled with a United victory would almost certainly grant the Geordies unique membership of the throwaway society, leaving them nine points adrift with a game in hand but only four left to play.

However, victory for the leaders is not a foregone conclusion given their difficulty in knocking Southampton out of the FA Cup last month and the south-coast club's own appetite for points at the other end of the table.

But, again, luck is with United. They welcome back Keane, Bruce and Philip Neville while Southampton have doubts over the central defenders Mankou (flu) and Hall (calf), plus the winger

The crunch

DATE	HOME	AWAY
Apr 13	Man City	away
Apr 17	Chelsea	home
Apr 27	Everton	home
May 5	West Ham	away
WIMBLEDON		
Apr 13	Middlesbrough	away
Apr 17	Blackburn	home
Apr 27	Coventry	away
May 5	Southampton	away
MANCHESTER CITY		
Apr 13	Sheff Wed	home
Apr 27	Aston Villa	away
May 5	Liverpool	home
SOUTHAMPTON		
Apr 13	Man Utd	home
Apr 17	Newcastle	away
Apr 27	Bolton	away
May 5	Wimbledon	home
QUEENS PARK RANGERS		
Apr 13	Coventry	away
Apr 17	West Ham	home
May 5	Notm Forest	away
COVENTRY		
Apr 13	QPR	home
Apr 17	Notm Forest	away
Apr 27	Wimbledon	away
May 5	Leeds	home
BOLTON		
Apr 13	West Ham	away
Apr 27	Southampton	home
May 5	Arsenal	away



Well-entitled... Reid is led from the Wembley pitch by Kendall after Everton failed to stop Liverpool's double in 1995, losing 3-1

Kendall and Reid meet again on a rising tide of fortune

Cynthia Bateman on the progress being made at Sheffield United and Sunderland

SIMPLY Red and White, the group whose record cheer up Peter Reid is at No. 41 in the charts, are hoping it will soon be in the top 20. Reid is hoping to be in a top 20 himself, and with only six points from a possible 15 needed to secure promotion to the Premiership, he should not need much cheering up.

But today his Sunderland side face a tough game at Bramall Lane, where Reid's friend and mentor Howard Kendall has performed miracles to take relegation-threatened Sheffield United not only to mid-table but within striking distance of the play-offs.

Both went through bad patches after their successful double act of manager and player, then player-coach, at Everton in the Eighties; and, later still, manager and player-coach at Manchester City.

City might not be struggling against relegation today but Kendall, whose reputation then was so high he was linked with the England job, was not tempted to try to repeat his successes at Everton. His departure in 1990 left an unhappy ship and Reid, who became player-manager, was coached four games into the 1993-94 season.

Reid, who had a short spell in Greek football, returned to a disastrous 79-day stay at Notts County last season before re-organizing his life and taking over the Blades from Dave Bassett in December.

Only weeks before he arrived Sheffield United were so broke they could not pay the players' wages. But with a new chairman and board, and money for transfers, Kendall has taken United from second from bottom to a position of hope in four months.

"I have had enough successes not to jump straight back in at the first offer I got, and there was a similar job on offer at the time. But this was the one I was happy to accept. I sensed that just staying in the division was the right one at the right time."

Mike McDermott had come in as a new chairman, there were already good players here and there was scope for me in the transfer market.

"It was spelled out when I arrived that just staying in this division would have counted as success for us this season. But I didn't just sign players to get us out of trouble. I wanted players who would help us progress and change the way the club was run."

He has signed nine players with his 24 million transfer

Tranmere promote Aldridge

Tranmere have agreed a two-year contract, one which will allow him to appoint his own backroom staff and to take on the role of manager, coach and player.

"I intend to carry on playing for as long as I can," said Aldridge, who takes over at a club around 25 million in debt and with no money available for new players.

Celtic's 10-year reminder that it's not over till it's over

Patrick Glenn

TOMMY BURNS, the Celtic manager, has been giving his players a daily reminder of the day in 1986 when the Celtic team he played for won the title with just minutes of the season remaining.

It was in the 83rd minute of Dens Park that Albert Kidd of Dundee scored the first of his two goals that beat Hearts and allowed Celtic, 3-0 winners at St Mirren, to take the championship.

Burns insisted that his team's failure to capitalise fully on Rangers' defeat by Hearts on Wednesday night Celtic only drew at home to Kilmarnock — should not be reason for despair. Tomorrow they face Hibernian at Easter Road, 24 hours after Rangers meet Partick at Burgh.

"This time last week we were five points behind and now we're four," Burns said. "One result like ours against Kilmarnock doesn't cancel out

TEAM SHEET

Team	Manager	Key Players
Chelsea v Leeds	Glen Hoddle	John Barnes, Stuart Pearce
Coventry v QPR	Richard Stone	Richard Stone, Steve Bruce
Man City v Sheff Wed	Alan Ball	Alan Ball, Steve Bruce
Middlesbrough v Wimbledon	Jan Peeters	Jan Peeters, Steve Bruce
Notm Forest v Blackburn	Wyn Jones	Wyn Jones, Steve Bruce

Death dues charged to Collymore

Soccer Diary

Martin Thorpe

KEVIN KEEGAN maybe as sick as a parrot but one Newcastle supporter has written to Stan Collymore blaming him for killing his budget. "He owes me big time," says Dominic Mour.

"He can't bring Peter back but I told him I couldn't forgive him for what he did and if he's going for a laugh, I want an item of his to auction for charity in repayment."

The feathers first flew in injury time of the recent classic between Liverpool and Newcastle. Dominic and his friend Peter Phillips were watching the game in the living room and, when Collymore scored Liverpool's late winner, they kicked out in frustration and accidentally knocked the budget's cage off its stand.

"He looked okay," says Dominic, "but when the game finished he looked again and realised he was dead. It was very sad."

Since the local paper ran the story Dominic has been inundated with people offering replacement budgets. "I could have had about six by now but I've turned them all down."

No budget can replace Peter, who has recently been laid to rest in a local park — not St James' — and his cage given to charity. "Anyway," says Dominic, "if I did have another budget and Newcastle kept losing, I could become known as a serial budget killer."

APARENTLY Howard

APARENTLY Howard Wilkinson had to take some terrible abuse at home last week but eventually agreed to go to the garden centre.

THERE has been a little friction recently between the Hartlepool manager Keith Houchen and his reserve goalkeeper Brian Horne. Houchen had to head last Saturday when the pair argued on the pitch after Houchen blamed Horne for the error that gave Gillingham their lead. Horne will be fined. An over-reaction? Not quite. "Nobody grabs me by the throat like that during a match," said Houchen afterwards.

STRANGER than fiction

SDAVID Speedie, one of the modern game's most undisciplined players, wants to go on an FA course to become a referee. And what did he say? "I hope it didn't spoil their day."

THREE is, it seems, a danger of the entire south coast slipping away.

In geographical order: Dover are second bottom of the Conference; Brighton second bottom of the Second Division and 10 points off safety; Worthing six points adrift at the bot-

Final tickets 'given away' by McCarthy

MANAGER Mick McCarthy, handed by the Football Association this week for receiving Cup final tickets for 10 years, claimed yesterday that he was an innocent victim of last season's scandal.

Two Norwegian fans paid £250 each for 250 tickets for the Wembley match between Manchester United and Everton last May and they were traced back to McCarthy as part of his allocation of four at Millwall, where he was then manager.

McCarthy said yesterday: "I am bitterly disappointed. I gave the four tickets to a well respected friend of mine at face value and he told me he had attended the game with another friend and their respective sons. I believed him."

On the playing front, the Manchester United midfielder Roy Keane was last night suspended for one match by the FA of Ireland, ruling him out of the clash against the Czech Republic in Prague on April 24. He was sent off in the closing minutes of the 2-0 defeat by Russia in Dublin last month.

Huddersfield sack striker on drugs ban

HUDDERSFIELD yesterday sacked their 25-year-old striker Craig Whittington following his ban by the Football Association from all activities connected with the game until November 1. He was found guilty of misconduct after two separate dope tests showed traces of cannabis.

The First Division club's decision to get rid of Whittington, who had made only one first-team appearance since his £25,000 move from Scarborough in the 1994 close-season, was announced by the chairman Geoff Hoad. The player's contract was due to expire in the summer.

"Given the support provided after the first positive test in March 1995, the club feels extremely disappointed and badly let down by the actions of the player," Hoad said.

"In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, and having considered the weight of the medical evidence provided at the hearing, the club feels it cannot continue to employ Craig Whittington."

Pool's Town, who last week escaped an individual entry into the Guinness Book of Records for the worst run in history, returned to form by losing 3-0 to Trowbridge Town in a midweek game.

Pool's had won their first point of the season with a 0-0 draw against Basingstoke to avoid suffering a world-record 40 defeats on the trot.

A N Other

LOOKING at the old video clips now it is a source of amazement that the outstanding left foot of this amiable Yorkshireman was apt to be taken for granted when it was not being overlooked. For 14 years he faithfully plied his craft under a lock, winning 17 international caps. He has retraced the conqueror's footsteps before tarrying briefly by the Tay. Last season he emerged from retirement, waving his pension book.

Last week: Jimmy Rimmer (Manchester United), Arsenal (Manchester United), Arsenal (Aston Villa, Swansea).

This month in...
goal
THE FOOTBALL MONTHLY

REVEALED
goal

JÜRGEN KLINSMANN
His first major interview since leaving Tottenham

FOWLER & McMANAMAN
On rucking with Ruddock, joining Everton, and the 'Frankie Vaughan' channel

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SportsGuardian

THE MASTERS: SHERRY, TORRANCE AND LYLE FAIL TO MAKE THE CUT



The first cut is the deepest... Gordon Sherry at the 2nd hole yesterday on his way to scoring 77, a total of 156 bringing a premature end to his first Masters. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID CANNON

Floundering Scots on the rocks

David Davies sees some illustrious names make an early exit at Augusta

THE high hopes entertained by the tallest player in modern golf, Gordon Sherry, plummeted yesterday in the second round. The 6ft 8in Scot completed his amateur career with a round of 77 to go with his opening 78, to miss the cut by a wide margin and said, on leaving the course: "I am now a professional."

Bob teaches Sherry, also missed the cut, after a 71 for 151, and the 1988 Masters champion Sandy Lyle joined the Scottish exodus with a 74 for 149. Costantino Rocca, one of nine European Ryder Cuppers playing, had a 78 for 153 but Bernhard Langer, despite missing a putt of only 18 inches at the short 4th, got round in 70 and, on 146, and with the cut looking likely to be one or two over par, should survive.

Sherry, whose ambition when he came here was to match Peter McEvoy's record as the only British amateur to make the cut, said: "That was my worst experience on a golf course. I haven't had scores like those for four years or more."

"I played better than the scores suggest but the greens here put the fear of death into you. Maybe, though, it'll stand me in good stead in the long term. I'll be back and I'll manage the course better next time."

Sherry fell into a simple trap, common to many first-timers, of going for the pins. As a tactic this is like a motorway, fine if it works, but exceedingly dangerous when it does not and Sherry was always struggling after missing five of his first six greens and being five over.

Other notables likely to miss the cut included the US PGA champion Steve Elkington (153), the defending champion Ben Crenshaw (151) and the American amateur champion Tiger Woods (150). The pre-tournament favourite Fred Couples, who had a disastrous 78 in the first round, was 10 shots better yesterday and his total of 146 left him sweating on where the cut's sea would drop.

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Augusta National

Card of the course

Hole	Yds	Par	Hole	Yds	Par
1	359	4	10	405	4
2	555	5	11	428	4
3	380	4	12	153	3
4	295	3	13	486	5
5	426	4	14	405	4
6	180	3	15	500	5
7	380	4	16	170	3
8	535	5	17	400	4
9	435	4	18	405	4
Out	245	36	In	240	36

6,925yds, Par 72

Stefan Popovich was not the only victim of last weekend's moment of evil. An entire community has had to watch its efforts to break free from a sleazy, fear-ridden reputation take another battering.

Outlook page 15

The back end of a quandary for Venables



David Lacey

IT IS safe to assume that when Terry Venables announces on Tuesday the England squad for the friendly against Croatia at Wembley on Wednesday week the principal point of discussion will concern the chances of Robbie Fowler starting his first international, having appeared briefly as a substitute last time.

There should be. Few teams have ever won anything of significance without a sound defence backed by solid goal-keeping. David Seaman should give Venables the latter in June but nine clean sheets in 15 friendlies have tended to obscure uncertainties at the back which may yet arise, to England's cost.

Steve Stone played him in on the right and there seemed to be plenty of space for Fowler to swing in towards goal. In fact he barely had time to weigh his options before Trifiro Ivanov swept the ball from his feet.

While outstanding attacking football has contributed to excitement in the Premiership, cheap goals have helped as well. In Euro '96 the price of goals will increase, along with the cost of defensive errors.



Couples... agonising wait after a second-round 68

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,626

A copy of the Collins English Dictionary will be sent to the first five correct entries drawn. Entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,626, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 2AX, by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday, April 22.

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

Set by Araucaria

Across

- 1 Islands where there's talk of lambs eating meat (7)
- 2 Word, not English, as entered, whence one may take umbrage (7)
- 3 Study of social behaviour - why the squirt? (4,11)
- 4 Track - 's not very good (5)
- 5 Weaver and spinner (called Jim) takes in one thousand (4,5)
- 6 Suitable for a jar, making bed trouble with Kibler (9)
- 7 First musician at Hastings (5)
- 8 West Indian theatre company backed to appear on screen (5)

Down

- 1 Confounded birds are whens flowers should be (7)
- 2 Dauphin gives Henry tennis balls, for instance (8,7)
- 3 Devices (say) person making one mark or other (9)

COLLINS ENGLISH DICTIONARY

4 This is almost a bit of fibre (5)
5 Spirit permitted in a father to the nation? (9)
6 Sphere left in sheets (5)
7 Stay-at-home doctor to previous monarch meant to bind up wounds (8,7)
8 Honesty reveals the one French song (7)
9 Place of power and pleasure - and beasting the waves? (9)
10 Place of poverty and confusion - and I rebel (9)
11 Art work with axe? (7)
12 Yellow cloth makes grandma enthusiastic (7)
13 Purveyor of Trojan horse: unless French, continue to err (5)
14 County and river where Auden lost his tan? (5)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,626

CE 123

Blair is the bride of Bill

PAUL F London R

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The Guardian Outlook

Tony Blair's US visit has turned into Bill and Tony's excellent adventure as they talked like twins separated at birth. R WAPPLE witnessed their Washington nuptials

Blair is the bride of Bill

IT IS one of the harsh realities of what was once called the "special relationship", that British political figures put less of a weight in the United States than American grandees, especially presidents, do in Britain.

Only Margaret Thatcher among post-Churchillian prime ministers, with her outside personality and unwavering self-assurance, has achieved anything approaching real equality in the States. Not one American in a hundred, I would wager, could name any of John Major's ministers, and two out of three of my compatriots could probably not even name John Major if asked to identify the present prime minister.

In his three-day romp through New York and Washington this week is any indication, Tony Blair could change that in a hurry. Not that he himself came with any mistaken assumption that people would be swooning over him in the streets.

"I had a vision when I sat down on one of your television shows," he told a gathering of Washington's near-great and near-good at Lutyn's magnificent pile of an embassy on Thursday evening. Just a few minutes after he learned of Labour's victory in the Transworth byelection, "I thought the interviewer would ask me: 'When does the film come out, then?' That's what's expected of British visitors." General Colin Powell, one of those on hand, loved it, and so did the other audience that Blair encountered during his transatlantic coming-out party.

Everyone was ready for something a little better from Britain, which has been represented in the American mass media lately mostly by the Dublin massacre, the deterioration of the situation in Ulster, and the Royal divorce. That and mad cow disease, which provided almost as many jokes as Bill Clinton's roving eye at this year's Gridiron dinner, the annual insiders gathering where reporters pretend to love politicians and vice versa.

Of course, the East Coast Establishment — politicians, financiers, big-time lawyers, cultural academics — has always had a bad case of Anglophilia, and that hasn't changed a bit. Its reaction is not necessarily that of Middle

America, but my guess is that, in this case, the two groups will tend to agree. Americans of all descriptions love the young, the fresh, the winsome, and at 41 Tony Blair supplies all that and more. Add to that the fact that he looks like a winner, proclaimed by no less august an authority than Tina Brown's *New Yorker* to be "The Next Prime Minister", and you have an almost perfect package for Yankee consumption. People magazine, *Forbes*'s answer to the *New Yorker*, gave Blair four pages and a dozen pictures and celebrated his fondness for rock music and the faded New York toy emporium, FAO Schwarz. Just the right kind of covered, pleasing stuff!

Blair has received plenty of national exposure, and not just in the magazines. Both the *Washington Post* and my own newspaper, the *New York Times*, ran substantial articles heralding the visit, which is unusual; kings and prime ministers come through Washington all the time without ruffling a line of type, and leaders of the opposition are usually considered about as newsworthy as tax accountants.

In addition, there were television appearances, a well-attended news conference at the National Press Club, chats with editorial boards and meetings with Vice-President Gore and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, George Soros and the avuncular Ian Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Only Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich, the Republican leaders on Capitol Hill, turned cold shoulders, just as Ronald Reagan did when Neil Kinrock visited in 1987. Bill Clinton and his consort, Hillary, clearly have found someone, be it in his fellow Ozonian, she, in Blair's wife, Cherie Booth, a colleague in the law.

Hillary showed up at a reception given for the Labour leader by Sidney Blumenthal, author of the adoring *New Yorker* piece, who gained a measure of infamy among his peers for the equally adoring piece he wrote about Clinton four years ago.

The President, meanwhile, welcomed Blair to the White House with the kind of exuberance (and the attendant flood of words) that he seldom lavishes on overseas guests. The assumption in Washington is that Clinton is going to



beat Bob Dole in the autumn (which may not be very prudent: four years ago, George Bush was as far ahead of Clinton as Clinton is ahead of Bob Dole now). If this proves correct, and Labour also wins in Britain, Blair and Clinton seem likely to form a partnership as sturdy as the one that linked Mrs Thatcher and her pal Ron. Certainly, that is the expectation in the White House. The two hit it off famously last November, when the President stopped in London on his way to Ireland. An American who was in the room said they talked "like twins separated at birth" about what

Blair called during his time here "the voyage of change" that all left-of-centre parties have endured recently. Clinton was ready for a European buddy. He and Helmut Kohl share a passion for food in bulk, but not a lot more; he and John Major are cut from entirely different bolts of cloth. The Tories' doomed effort to help re-elect George Bush by ransacking through Bonn Office files for material that would demonstrate the young Bill Clinton's lack of patriotism while at Oxford during the Vietnam War still rankles, but it is not at the centre of either the President's lack of

enthusiasm for Major or his attraction to Blair. On the most basic level, one of Clinton's closest advisers says, he finds Major dull and Blair interesting. Major conventional and Blair intellectually adventurous. But beyond that, there is the voyage. The Democrats have not been out of power as long as Labour has — Jimmy Carter was just taking office as Jim Callaghan was leaving — but by the end of the 1980s, they seemed equally out of steam. Michael Dukakis and Neil Kinrock both came to be seen as the last gasp of the aggressive, all-devouring welfare state.

Only in such a situation, some would argue, could people as young and as little known as Blair and Clinton come to the fore. Both have jettisoned a good deal of their parties' ideological baggage, especially their commitment to big government, though Clinton has signed and signed more in repudiating much of the New Deal and the Great Society than Blair has done in de-emphasising socialism and the lot of trade unions. Both have set out to recapture blue-collar voters, once the backbone of their parties, who were lured away by Thatcher in Britain and by Reagan in the US.

New Democrat, New Labour, both seeking ways to keep government viable as a social force in a day of widespread worship of the untrammeled marketplace. Enjoining workers to enter into a covenant with the government, Blair says, "We will help construct a community that is worth living in, but in return you've got to take the chance given to you. Opportunity and responsibility go together." To American ears, the words — if not the accent — sound Clintonian. If you set aside the doubts about Clinton's morality, which are deeply felt in the

United States, however beside the point they may seem to Europeans, the overriding question about both men is whether they really stand for anything. Both are accused by their opponents and by some more dispassionate observers of singing right-wing songs to conceal left-wing hearts. I was struck by Tony Blair's assertion that both of them are "far more concerned about the next election than the next generation", which reminded me how bad Benn and his American counterparts were at winning elections and thereby gaining the power they craved to help the future generations.

Blair did his best to put doubts to rest, telling Americans what they surely most wanted to hear: that the US and Britain needed to work in tandem, not only in Bosnia but also in Northern Ireland, that Britain must not make a false choice between Europe and America but must embrace both, that neo-isolationism is as much a danger in Britain as in the US, that Labour wanted not to run companies but to help them succeed.

Pat Buchanan would have hated it, but then Pat Buchanan wasn't invited to any of the parties.

On matters economic, Blair made a special effort, paying more attention to bankers than to union big shots, Wall Street, which considered some of his predecessors unsound if not downright loony, was for the most part reassured. After a breakfast meeting sponsored by Henry Kissinger, Felix Ro-

Clinton finds Major dull and Blair interesting — Major tediously conventional and Blair adventurous

mayn, the philosophically inclined head of Leonard Firewe, said he had been impressed. "He struck me," Roheynt said, "as a modern politician very conversant with modern capitalism, its problems and the lack of obvious solutions."

The only really negative comment I heard from those who met Blair this week was the suggestion that he was perhaps too silky by half. Not very surprisingly, it came mostly from people who tend to call the President "Slick Willy". Those more favourably disposed to the President put the matter more obliquely. "A little lacking in gravitas," said a megaplwyer. "Like the young John Kennedy — but he's smarter than Kennedy was, I think."

Whether Clinton's and Blair's electoral fortunes are closely linked, as was widely suggested this week on both sides of the Atlantic, seems questionable. It is argued that if American voters are prepared to accept the 72-year-old Dole, who offers diligence and experience in place of innovation and excitement, British voters will be more inclined to stick with an old hand, too.

In fact the two countries have often produced a certain political parallelism: in addition to Reagan and Thatcher, think back to Harold Wilson and Lyndon Johnson, both elected in landslide in 1964, both domestic innovators, both devotions and politically adept. But if polls are to be believed, Major and his lot are much less popular than Dole and his party; remember, the Republicans won a massive victory in the Congressional elections less than 18 months ago, and despite New Gingrich's mistakes, much of their agenda still strikes a resonant chord with the voters.

R W Apple is Washington bureau chief of the *New York Times*, and headed its London bureau between 1977 and 1986.

PAUL FOOT suggests you arm yourself with the London Review of Books



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Paul Foot writing on the arms trade in the LRB

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A radical party to behold

WE HAVE been frequently reminded in the last few weeks that Tamworth, the principal town of Staffordshire South-East, was the birthplace of modern Conservatism. This morning, with a Labour MP now representing Sir Robert Peel's constituency, it looks more like its graveyard. In the mid-term of a Parliament it might just be possible to shrug off losing a seat to the Opposition on a swing of 23 per cent. But this Government is now in its fifth and final year in office. At this stage in its life-cycle a swing of 22 per cent begins to look terminal. At the same stage in the last Parliament, the Conservatives lost a by-election to Labour, but the swing in Monmouth was only 13 per cent. To come back from a swing of 22 per cent in just over a year would be almost like rising from the dead.

Of course, stranger electoral things have happened — though not many. The comeback that the Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, has so often declared to be imminent could yet materialise. All one can say is that there was no sign of it at Staffordshire South-

East on Thursday. The Tories are still near the bottom of the hole which they dug for themselves when sterling collapsed in 1992. Granted that by-elections usually exaggerate the unpopularity of the Government and that this one may be no exception, on the latest Guardian-ICM adjusted poll, one would still have expected a swing of "only" 11 per cent to Labour. Even on the average of the latest unadjusted polls one would have expected no more than 19 per cent. What pushed the swing up to 22 per cent in Staffordshire was not so much the increase in the Labour vote as the collapse in the Conservative vote. For every 100 who voted Tory in 1992, only 40 voted Tory this week.

But the biggest political difference between the situation when Labour won Monmouth in May 1991 and the situation now is the credibility of Tony Blair. The precondition for the Conservatives to stage an effective comeback is for Mr Blair to be forced into a retreat and he seems currently in no mood to do that. The Labour leader told the British-American Chamber of Commerce this week that "success comes only for those who are constantly upgrading performance". He seems more than happy to apply this maxim to his own party and his own performance as party leader. He is constantly looking for new allies in his quest for power. Yesterday it was President Clinton. Earlier this week it was that demon of the currency market, George Soros. Last Sunday it was God, whom he enlisted as his inspiration if not his ally in an Easter interview with the Sunday Telegraph. Last year he flew out to Hayman Island in Australia to address the

assembled ranks of Newscorp executives and the demon of the tabloid press, Rupert Murdoch. Each new ally represents a new reassurance and neutralises — at least for a while — another potential enemy. Clearly Mr Blair is not going to allow himself to suffer character assassination at the hands of the Sun ruck if he can avoid it. There will be no Nightmare on Blair Street this time. He is not going to be denounced from every pulpit as a Godless socialist. He is not going to see the pound plunge on the foreign exchanges at the very prospect of a Blair government. He is not going to be cold-shouldered in Washington or suffer Neil Kinnock's fate of being destabilised by the White House press corps.

This is what must depress Dr Mawhinney far more than the result of the Staffordshire by-election. Every possible angle through which a Labour leader might be vulnerable, through the tabloid press, through the foreign exchanges, through morality, through the Church, through inexperience in foreign affairs, is being systematically closed down. On his American trip Mr Blair has become clearer than ever both about the price he is willing to pay for success and about the direction in which he intends to take his party and, assuming victory, his government. Labour is no longer a party of the left, he told Americans. New Labour will be a government of the radical centre. It will set about the job of changing Britain "from an explicitly centre-ground position, taking people with us and recognising that unless we combine change with equity, change will not come". Warm words, but ones that many in his party will find difficult to swallow.

Don't mention 'adult' mags

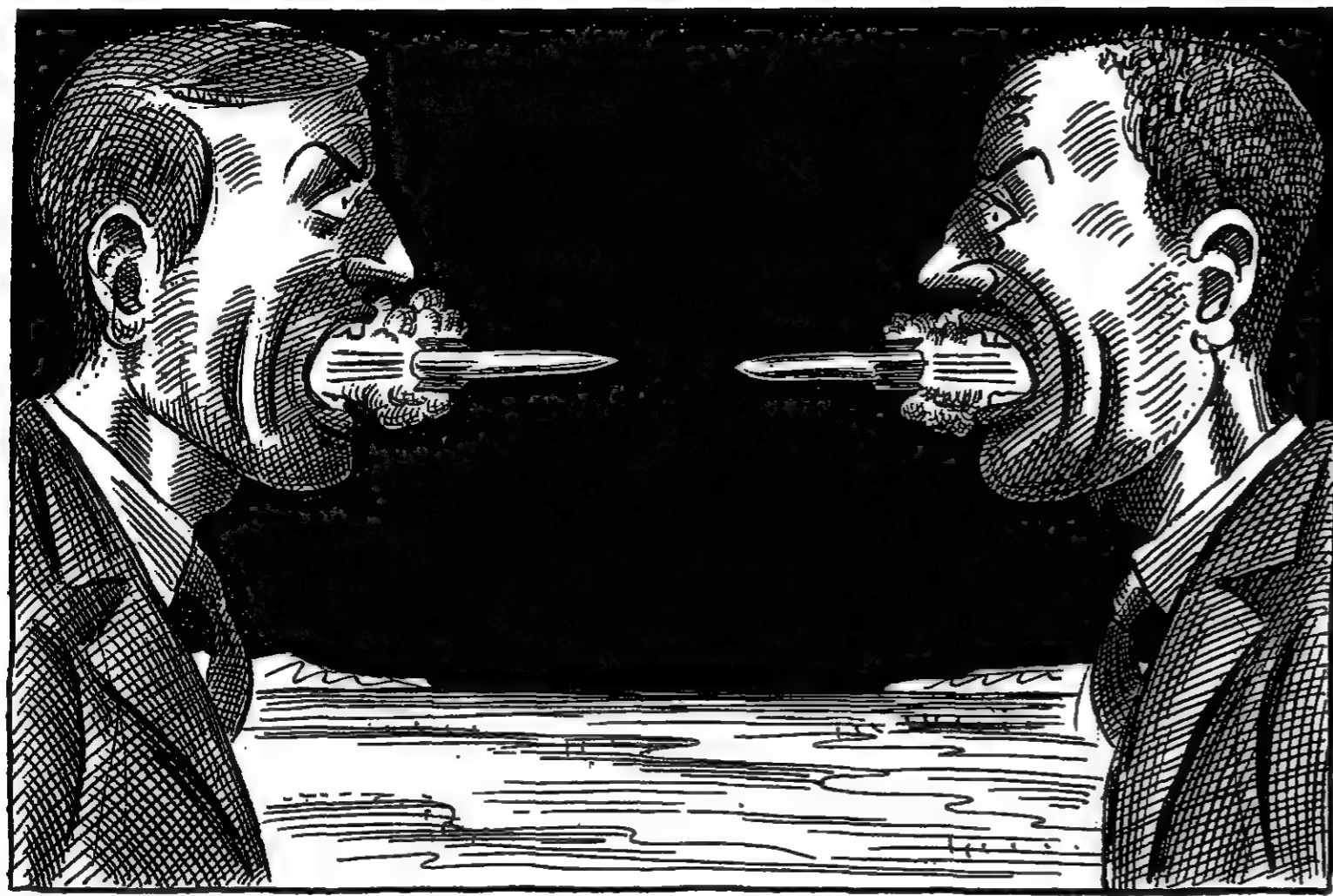
Where did you buy your copy of the Guardian this morning? From a newsagent, is the most likely reply. Today being Saturday, however, an increasing number of readers — 9 per cent, compared to 7.5 per cent a year ago — buy their paper not at the corner newsagents, but at a supermarket or a petrol station. Various explanations suggest themselves: the transformation of food and fuel retailers into purveyors of everything and anything; the introduction of the dreaded bar code to the front page, now something of a design feature in its own right; and the decline of the newsagent.

Newsagents can be tired, dispiriting places. Confectionery, tobacco, newspapers, magazines, and Lottery tickets compete for attention. And up there, on the top shelf, sit the great unmentionables of British high street retailing, the "adult" magazines. Unmentionable, that is, until this week. WH Smith, which shares 75 per cent of newspaper and magazine distribution with John Menzies, had operated a "box-out" policy for its 20,000 newsagent clients. A pre-packed selection of items was sent to the newsagents, who could refuse the titles they did not wish to stock. That was the theory. In practice, many complained that their requests were ignored, and they would be stuck with unwanted pornography. Hence, in part, the unsettling nature of shopping in many newsagents.

Loiter for too long by the magazines and you start to feel furtive. No matter that you really are only interested in the motorcycling magazines on the top shelf, the grubbiness of the adult titles is infectious.

The solution is simple. Put the sex magazines in the sex shops. This is not censorship. It is simply to remove material that some people may find offensive to a place where it would be impossible to stumble upon it by accident. Smith's decision to reverse the procedure, making it an "opt in" system, will go some way toward removing unwanted magazines in "family" stores.

It is an odd episode, coming only a month after WH Smith began to withdraw some 350 small, and therefore uncommercial, magazines from its retail outlets on the basis that its customers were "looking for mainstream products". Do adult magazines fit the definition of mainstream? The market for pornographic magazines has risen by 10 per cent in the last year; Smith's profits fell by 7.6 per cent last year, and the company has shed 1,000 jobs. In many European countries, such a move is illegal: commercial viability is no justification for refusing to stock a magazine. WH Smith says it has an obligation to balance "commercial and moral obligations". If this means an uninterrupted diet of glossy magazines of one type on the lower shelves and glossy magazines of a distinctly different nature on the top shelf, it is a short-sighted approach. Without the margins, the mainstream stagnates. Why not free up some space on the top shelf for Top Hats Monthly, Racing Pigeon Pictorial, and Tribune?



Those tongues of gun fire

In the Middle East, killing your enemies sends a message to your friends. MARTIN WOOLLACOTT on the futile dialogue of death. Illustration by PETER TILL

WHATEVER their mother tongue, the peoples of the Middle East are all fluent in the region's second language, that of violence. The messages they exchange are literally written in blood. They are almost always ineffective. And they have increasingly become messages addressed as much to one's own side as to the enemy. The stereotypical Israeli situation is one in which you kill people in order to send a message to another government that it should use violence against the people who are using violence against you.

You do this without real expectation that it will work but in order to prove to your own people that you are doing what you can. The typical Syrian situation is one in which

you permit your proxies to kill people in order to send a message that life will continue to be painful for another government until it gives you a settlement on your terms, which, however, are less important in themselves than as a signal of toughness to your own people. The typical situation of what are called terrorist movements is that you kill people in order to prove to your own people, to the Israeli government, and to Arab governments, that you are a power to be reckoned with.

The use of force arises in part from the need to maintain a certain image and to convince potentially angry and cynical men and women that you are worthy of leading them. There never was an age of innocence in the modern Middle East. But there was a time when politicians and

soldiers, and the leaders of armed movements, genuinely thought that force could bring relatively easy solutions. If so, it is long past. Violence used in pursuit of clear objectives — smash the PLO, drive out the Jew, wake up the West to the Palestinian cause — was bad enough. But what we see now is violence as an aid to political survival.

Even the Islamists no longer believe in the attainability of their supposed ultimate aims. The splits within both Hamas and Hizbollah show that there are some who, at least tactically, believe in politics now rather than in protracted war. Of those speaking the language of violence in the Middle East, very few really believe that it will get them what they say they expect it to get. And they all have plenty of experience of violence getting them the opposite of what they wanted.

For Shimon Peres, this is a hard time. Twelve years ago his first task as prime minister of a national unity government was to extract the Israeli army from Lebanon, where it was dangerously dug in after the previous Likud government's invasion of Lebanon went

The Ecstasy and the agony



Sara Maitland

DO YOU personally think that if a new youth dance venue is to receive a licence, it should provide a "chill out space" where dancers can find a little quiet and a proper supply of cold water so that they can counteract the effects of taking an illegal drug? (Don't worry if you know nothing about the subject — that is apparently irrelevant.)

I'm a journalist, so I'm allowed an opinion on this or almost anything else, and — although lots of people may disagree — no one is going to call for my resignation. Paul Betts is a bereaved father so he's allowed an opinion too. The death of a child is a dreadful thing, and I hesitate even to say this, but it does not make anyone an expert on whatever the child died from. On the contrary, it might reasonably be held that someone as close to such a tragedy is less likely to hold a balanced view than someone with more distance and overview.

Nonetheless much of the press has been quoting him with approval while calling for the resignation of Mary Hartnoll, who is paid £76,000 a year, precisely because she is an expert. Moreover she expressed her expert opinion — that it is counterproductive to tell people lies, and particularly that their experience has taught them are lies — within a perfectly proper professional context. She wrote an internal memo to her fellow professionals in direct relation to the matter on which the authority had to form a position.

Now in fairness I should say that I agree with her. I do not think that fear is an effective way of changing behaviour. I do want my own children to have the best possible information on which to make their own decisions. I do not think that people old enough to vote should be lied to. I do not think that Ecstasy is the worst thing in the world; there are far more alcohol-related deaths than Ecstasy-related deaths but we can still get "sensible drinking" advice. I do not think in fact go further than Ms Hartnoll. I believe there is

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THAT unlikely combo, John Major and the Vote-Rockers, may prove another triumph of the Prime Minister's mastery of "game theory", a science so esoteric as to be

understood only by two Nobel prizewinners plus Our John. The story so far: Rock The Vote is a non-political (ie anti-Tory) campaign to persuade young people to heed Robert "Tamworth Manifesto" Peel and "register, register, register" for the vote. Central Office's endorsement of RTV was, according to the Daily Telegraph (April 6), further evidence of the PM's lamentable soft-headedness: indeed, "the current Conservative leadership is... in a state of denial about who its enemies are." This newspaper, however, congratulated him (April 11) for endorsing a campaign that can do his party little but harm. Come election night, both viewpoints could be proved quite wrong. On May 30, 1998, the Crossman diaries record Cabinet discussing proposals to drop the voting age to 18 from 21. High ideal-

ism was represented by Michael Stewart, Peter Shore, Tony Benn and Gerald Gardner: just about everybody else worried over Labour's election chances. One fear was that Celtic youth would misguidedly vote Scottish or Welsh nationalist: limiting the reduction to 30 could safeguard against such foolishness. In the event, 18 it was, and a general feeling that youth was, on the whole, for Harold. Two years and 19 days later, the young idealists marched to the polls: by nightfall, one ERG Heath was heading for 10 Downing Street. A lesson not lost, we think, on the present address.

WAR, ALL-OUT war, on the weaseliest of weasel words, "appropriate", a clogging, cloying all-purpose term of bureaucratic approval

whose antonym "inappropriate" is rapidly becoming the Britain of the 1990s what "un-American" was to the post-war United States. Latest sightings include, from Thursday night, a BBC report that two nursing employees had been arrested, their crimes including "inappropriate attitudes" to mental patients. Over on Newsnight, John Prescott dead-batted queries on his boss Mr Blair's tax-cutting zeal with: "a statement will be made at the appropriate time" (it would be a start were TB to make his statements in the appropriate country; Thursday's olive-branch to top-rate payers was delivered from Wall Street). Those who would appropriate appropriate in the usual sense of the word, read in John Grisham's trillion-seller The Client (Century, 1993) — she hugged him appropri-

ately, perhaps we should expect no better, but did PD James in Original Sin (Faber, 1994) really need an inappropriate (ie a female detective's trousers) and an appropriate (ie the entrance to a convent) on the same page? There are others. Be warned: the A-word is sprayed around like fire-fighting foam by those who would bury us all beneath a ton of codes of conduct and "voluntary" guidelines. Resist. Hug someone inappropriately every day.

ANOTHER front, another war, or, in this case, a crusade. In the wake of the Tamworth disaster (sorry, fightback) Michael Howard called yesterday for a "crusade" to remind voters of Labour's flaws and the Tories' overall wonderfulness. This is merely the latest Conservative crusade: early in his

premiership, Mr Major launched a "crusade against crime". About two years later, he announced a "crusade against crime", the first crusades having apparently got lost in the desert. The real crusades, of course, were mostly disasters, full of desperate accidents, catastrophes, vile misunderstandings and counter-productive results. Odd that the Tories should be so keen on them (except that so much of their recent record hauntingly resembles the crusades).

TRAINSPOTTING (the gentle pastime, not the cinematic adventures of Caledonian morphinists) survives and thrives. Last week's tentative suggestion that St Albans Abbey-Watlington Junction may be England's shortest branch line brought forth hoots of derision from the localities.

صوتنا من الاعمال

They give the crown to the 3/4-mile Stourbridge Junction-Town Line in West Midlands, although "the true connoisseur" writes one spotter, prefers the quietest to the shortest: one train travels daily once each way on the 2 1/4-mile Watford Junction-Croxley Green branch, finishing at 6.54am. After this, the tracks dose in peace.

HEAD BEADLE John Simpson is not a volatile, media-loving police chief in the manner of Manchester's much-missed James Anderson, but yesterday, he was firmly on the record with his views on police headgear. A "working party" is expected to recommend that forces replace the bobby's helmet with something more with-it (probably a long peaked baseball cap, the better to assist officers to squint at

overtime forms or at any members of the public they wish to shoot). The nation's smallest force is having none of it: Mr Simpson and his two beaules will continue to patrol Burlington Arcade in their traditional toppers. The review "wouldn't affect us at all", he said, going on to praise the traditional helmet, strong enough to take a constable's weight should he wish to peer over a wall.

FINALLY, how could we last week have placed Google 23 miles east of Hull, dunking 18,284 Yorkshire folk in the North Sea? In the Brigade of Guards there are, famously, no excises, but in the 317 cadet detachment, Queen's Rgt the honour code ran as follows: (a) It wasn't my fault, (b) I was told to do it, (c) any chance of a lift back to Rear Echelon?

Chapeltown was notorious even before the horrific murder of pensioner Stefan Popovich - comics used it as shorthand for grim. But MARTIN WAINWRIGHT discovers a community determined to pull together.

Photograph by DON MCPHEE



Playdays... Mojoes Childcare in Chapeltown (above) is a self-supporting business; streets often portrayed as mean and dangerous hide a wealth of communal organisations

PHOTOGRAPH (below) GAVIN SMITH

Random death in the life of a Leeds suburb

THE STORY could hardly have been more horrible: a pensioner dragged from his car after asking the way, kicked and beaten and left to die in the street, for the sake of his wristwatch, his wedding ring and a pathetic £50. But Serbian war veteran Stefan Popovich, his bereaved family and friends were not the only innocent victims of last week's moment of evil in a very ordinary side-streets in Leeds.

Yorkshire actor, kicks off an account of a visit last year with: "I've been to Chapeltown, and I haven't been mugged, stabbed or offered narcotic delights. Like more than 99.9 per cent of the area's visitors, he found himself facing the normalities of Leeds. The biggest threat to his wellbeing, during a day of readings at Bracken Edge primary school, was "the school dinner of pizza, mixed veg and a cream horn".

only in some degree that rudeness which is peculiar to them". But they lack a sound physical base for the other self-improvers who followed: Jews ("Chapeltown is a little Israel in full working order," said a local paper in the early 1950s), east Europeans, Caribbean immigrants and arrivals from the Indian sub-continent.

ment), thumbs through a similar list of 89 local organisations - the CAB to Jitterbugs Nursery - which try to meet for a monthly networking lunch. "Look, I'm not a Pollyanna in rose-coloured glasses," she says. "But we're here because my husband got a cheap flat in Chapeltown Road when he was a student, and we've made lots of friends and become very involved with the church; and this is the part of the world I like and where I want to be."



finding that a widespread fear of going out at night has, for some people, extended into daylight. Particularly depressing, the modern local library has a question mark over its future, largely because of the fear engendered by its position almost next to a public house, a hub of street drug-dealing, with gangs of intimidating-looking young people hanging about outside it. Local primary schools are reluctant to take pupils along in the traditional crocodile, even to specially organised events.

highly concentrated levels of deprivation which give under-qualified school-leavers small hopes of a fair start in life. Leeds' unemployment percentage of 9.4 shoots up to 33.9 per cent in the Markham Avenue area, 33.7 per cent in Leopold Street and 38 per cent in the Granges, the grid of substantial redbrick houses where the Phelps live. Unemployment among 16-24s, at 16 per cent for the city, was 35.3 per cent in Markham Avenue, 42.7 per cent in Leopold Street and 46.3 per cent in the Granges. The figures are now 18 months old, but today's ratios are little changed.

agencies tackling this problem, in ways which could provide models for Taggart. His Chapeltown and Harehills Assisted Learning Community School, housed in Leeds' old tram depot, offers extra help to children - mostly Afro-Caribbean - who have flunked or suffered from low teacher expectations at school. "We try to teach them to believe in themselves and develop confidence," he says. "By providing extra support families pay a minimum £1 fee for evening or weekend classes; we hope to help the kids cope with work and school, and perhaps change the attitudes towards them of some of their teachers."

recently had the offer to go full-time," she says. "But I love it here. I've lived in Chapeltown now for 37 years and I love it here - it's my community and I want to put some quality work back in for the children." Such shoots of hope in the area have not blossomed unworriedly; the Queen and the Prince of Wales have both visited the area recently and Brainard Brinkley's MBE is matched, at the other end of Chapeltown Road, by one for Nadine Senior, head of the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Her school offers 10p ball and dance sessions to local young people, and is now teaming up with West Yorkshire Playhouse to encourage Leeds businesses to invest in another Chapeltown initiative, encouraging regeneration through arts projects.

New rules for a ruler beating a full retreat

British public life. In the death of the Queen Mother, any royal birth, marriage, death or anniversary was an excuse for a show. Yet the woman who is not only our Head of State but who is also acknowledged as one of the few members of the House of Windsor to emerge unscathed from the past decade is planning a low-profile day. She will celebrate her 70th birthday deep inside a distant palace, far out of range of the telephone lines of the paparazzi, ignored by a nation of Sunday shoppers.

They are certain that the death of the Queen Mother will one day prove that the British are not just a nation of show. Forget Diana and Fergie, they are saying, just keep following the coffin. It is a bit odd, to put it mildly, that the monarchy is so dependent on such back ward-looking events. But it is significant. Vera Lynn's wartime song said "We'll meet again. Don't know where. Don't know when. But I know we'll meet again some sunny day".

Nothing in the royals' outlook equips them to do more than wave at the world beyond the Palace walls. public values are set by Rupert Murdoch not by John Ruskin. As the dream marriage crumbled into a night-mare divorce, the monarchy has lurched once again, this time towards its imagined past.

new lost their touch in the 1980s. The last time Buckingham Palace is to try to reconnect with the innocent, deferential 1950s. Like John Major's similar search for his own land of lost content from the same era, it is doomed to fail, but without the politician's ultimate release of electoral defeat.

The hamster that lay down but took forever to die

Suzanne Moore. SEX and death. That is what you give children pets for, isn't it? So that they learn about these vital topics. You know - the cycle of life, respect for all living things, the curious process of reproduction - a pet of one's own is supposed to provide all this and more. Learning that rabbits do indeed breed like rabbits, that disturbed mice will eat their own babies, that tadpoles rarely make it to full froghood, that a dog's life means endless attempts at fornication with things that are not actually dogs. These are the essential facts of life we feel must be passed on to our own offspring.

it has to be admitted, sorely abused hamster, I can honestly say that death remains the great mystery it always was. The passing of this particular hamster was not easy. It died and was resurrected on several occasions, promoting confusion in my children's minds. The first time it died was certainly dramatic - floods of tears, sobbing. "Don't die Fatchy, please don't die." The thing was clearly on its way out but not quite dead. I phoned the vet, anxious to be seen to be doing something. The vet was busy with a more important animal but his assistant had a word. "Have you got any Laccasade Sport?" Unfit mother that I am I had neither of these things but I found an eye-dropper and, improvising, stuck some sugar water into its quivering mouth.

Much discussion was had about tombstones. "I hate it when they say that the person just fell asleep," said my oldest. "It isn't just like falling asleep, is it? We talked of cremation and burial, of reincarnation and of hamster heaven, imagined as a great wheel in the sky. The day finally came when Fatchy could no longer be resurrected by a soft drink and we found him stiff at the bottom of the cage. My youngest was distraught, wanting to phone Childline. Her sister was awry so I felt that I must preserve him till she came home. I wrapped him in Microware film and put him in a Chinese take-away box with a few dried flowers around him. Then he started to smell and had to be put out the back where the cat tried to get him out of the box. Is there no dignity?"

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A flood on Bridgewater

THE Home Office Minister, Tim Kirkhope, disputes with Michael Chance, the prosecutor in the Carl Bridgewater murder case, the importance of the undisclosed evidence relating to unknown fingerprints on Bridgewater's bicycle.

The object of a trial is for all of the evidence to be tested by prosecuting and defence counsel, in front of a judge and jury. It is not for the Home Office to rehearse the prosecution's case and then to deny the evidence to the court because, in their view, neither defence counsel nor judge and jury could have drawn a different conclusion.

Ray Elms,
71 Bedford Court Mansions,
Bedford Avenue,
London WC1B 3AD.

THE latest twist in the Bridgewater Four campaign reminds me of Adolf Beck, wrongly accused and falsely imprisoned, who served five years before being pardoned.

Had the fingerprint-classification system introduced in 1901 — just months before his release — been in place, no prosecution could have proceeded. Beck received £5,000 in compensation, an enormous sum at a time when shop assistants were lucky to earn £50 per annum.

If the original verdict on the Bridgewater Four is overturned, what price justice today?

Michael Linden,
38 Cecil Park,
London N6 9AS.

LIKE JIM Morrell (Untrue confessions, April 11), I clearly remember the Carl Bridgewater murder, the attendant publicity and trial,

but it is linked in my mind with a similar tragedy which occurred at the time: the killing of Blair Peach, who was beaten to death by a group of police officers from the Special Patrol Group following an anti-racist demonstration.

Carl Bridgewater was killed by a single bullet, but four men were sentenced to life for his murder. The group of policemen who attacked Blair Peach were identified but as it was not possible to identify the individual responsible for the blow that killed him, they all walked free.

Both trials took place at about the same time but with very different outcomes — a case of rough justice if ever there was one.

Nigel Baker,
21 Cephas Avenue,
London E1 4AR.

MARCEL BERLINS (Write large, April 9) asks: "In whose interests is it to keep innocent men in prison?" Among those who have an interest is Michael Howard because, if the Bridgewater Four's innocence is officially acknowledged, people might start to deduce that there are other innocent people in prison; some might even realise that there probably are thousands of innocent people in prison; and some might conclude that "prison works" is more accurate an expression than anything else uttered. It is in Michael Howard's interest to conceal the fact that prison works very effectively by incarcerating the innocent and enabling the guilty to escape justice.

Sean Goodwin-Cullen,
176 Leytner Court,
London W6 0NS.

Citizens advice bungle

IT IS interesting to note that the main defence of Ann Abraham, the chief executive of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, against the delivery of bad advice appears to be that solicitors may not be very good either (Letters, April 11).

If NACAB is committed to high quality advice, it has to move beyond window dressing poor advice. As a CAB caseworker I find it hard to accept that NACAB's commitment to deliver good advice is anything more than a paper exercise.

It is not enough to commission reports and privately acknowledge that 40 per cent of advice (on employment) is wrong. For a start, there are questions of commitment to the 40 per cent who were advised wrongly — are they to be called back to have their advice rectified or offered appropriate compensation?

Unfortunately NACAB is still advocating the use of self-taught volunteers, mainly committed to the work but too often unable to deliver professional and accurate advice. The basic training for volun-

teer advisers is wholly inadequate. NACAB's insistence on operating an open-door service delivering advice on almost any issue seems at best idealistic.

It is essential that NACAB moves away from the "We can deal with anything" approach towards the provision of specialist advice in areas of expertise alongside simple, non-advisory signposting to other organisations for other issues. Only then will it be able to tap into future funding opportunities such as legal-aid franchising.

Any defence by Ann Abraham that things have, and continue to, improve does not fit with my experience. Name and address supplied.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4630 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3EP, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them: shorter ones are more likely to appear.



The quango quandary (cont.)

WHAT value Nolan? If his proposals that quango leaders should not be paid are true, I take it for granted that he's doing his work for nothing — otherwise his proposals are hollow (Nolan: end quango scandal, April 11). What is a commission like this if it's not a quango? Perhaps, after all, we should have been prepared to pay more for a more analytical and competent job.

Quangos cover a wide field. The people highlighted by you for criticism on your front page head competitive businesses and do not pretend to do anything other than make business work. They are neither leaders of public opinion nor politicians bending to every whim of public opinion nor gain public representatives monitoring services in the public interest. They head publicly owned businesses.

You ignore the huge improvements that have occurred in nationalised industries and publicly owned businesses and services (nationalised and services) (Nolan: end quango scandal, April 11). Nationalised industries were a laughing stock, unsuccessful because of the quality of their leaders, largely ap-

pointed for political fidelity and not business merit. Contrast this with the success of nationalised industries in Canada, led by highly paid, properly qualified and motivated people producing economic returns to the public purse. Is Nolan so naive as to believe that a man like Shaw, accepting a job to lead and reform the old P.L.A. or to chair the AA, would risk his reputation in doing only 12 days a year?

Would the committee of the AA appoint him chairman and probably pay him a good deal more than the Government for just 10 or 11 days a year if its members believed, after many years as its treasurer, that he wasn't worth it?

Would the Government have attracted him for nothing when business would have paid him as much if not more? Thankfully we have finally accepted the old adage that, in business at least, paying peanuts produces only monkeys.

David R Thomas,
345 Nine Mile Ride,
Kingdom, Berks RG40 3NH.

THE payments to quango-crats highlighted in your report (Top quangoocrat on £34,000 a day, April 11) are outrageous. But it would be wrong to draw from this the conclusion that all payments should be ended. Those who sit on public bodies, whether as elected councillors or as government appointees, should do so out of a sense of public duty — but if there is no payment whatsoever, public life will be limited to the retired or wealthy.

There is a remarkable discrepancy between local councillors who can be surplussed for financial mistakes and quango-crats who receive large payments, but cannot be held to account for errors that cost the public dear.

Those taking decisions about public expenditure should be accountable to the people affected — either through local councils or through regional assemblies. But the principle that led to MPs being paid stands true: such positions are not open to all if there is no payment. This might not be a serious problem if we are talking about 12 days a year, but what about being leader of a council, which might take two days a week?

The sensible approach would be to have a universal

system of allowances which compensates those sitting on public bodies for their time at a standard rate. Median white-collar earnings would be a fair rate.

(Clr) Tai Michael,
22c Bickerton Road,
London N19 5J3.

WHILE the Guardian discovers about current quangoism are important (though you omit the fact that the chairman of Boots the Chemist earns £38,000 for his two-days-a-week post as Chair of the Funding Agency for Schools) we need surely to take a slightly longer view.

Patronage and nomination have long been co-extensive with governance here. It is usually illiterate to compare England with other "spoils systems" (normally the US is invoked), since we have a 1,000-year history here of favouring a certain class or type of person. Anyone who has examined the correspondence regarding senior appointments will find again and again the nervous anxieties so underlined in true English tradition: "Er, will he fit in?"

Philip Corrigan,
19 Sidmouth Gardens,
Bristol BS5 5HE.

Michael Howard's performance on probation is criminal

MICHAEL HOWARD'S proposal to link probation officers' pay to the re-offending rates of those under their supervision (Probation pay linked to crime, April 10) instantly seeks to blame crime on a group of professionals who are at the sharp end of efforts to reduce it. Under this scheme I would be punished because some of my clients commit more offences: anyone with the slightest knowledge of criminal justice knows this to be entirely unavoidable.

I have a caseload of nearly 50 young men between 15 and 21, who mostly have substantial previous convictions by the time they reach me. I supervise them on licence when they are released from Young Offender Institutions. Not surprisingly, some of them do re-offend during the licence period. There is not one thing I — or anyone else — could do to prevent that.

I can think of two recent cases where my client has innocently owed up to me in considerable shame about having committed a new offence.

In both cases, the young man clearly knew he had let himself down — and let me down. The new offences were far less serious than their previous ones. These, in the real world, are successes — people whose offending career is diminishing in seriousness and who are beginning to feel remorse.

I love my job but perhaps I've got it all wrong: it's actually our fault that some offenders cannot be stopped in their tracks by receiving a Probation Order, or being on a licence.

Laura Kerr,
Sheffield.

SUGGEST cutting out the middle man, so to speak, and having offenders work for the probation service? That way, their tendency to burgle would be limited by the prospect of no pay rise at the end of the year. Probation officers, on the other hand, may find themselves a more lucrative form of employment, and one which is only slightly more despised by the Home Office, in the field of crime.

Marilyn J Gregory,
43 Harcourt Road,
Sheffield S10 1DH.

PERHAPS Mr Howard's pay could be reduced whenever a prisoner escapes from custody, or indeed could be linked to the overall levels of crime?

Sean Alta,
82 Crescent Road,
Alexandra Park,
London N22 4RZ.

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For the record

REGARDING your report (Airport asylum poster ban lifted, April 12) of an alleged ban at BAA's airports on posters giving information to asylum seekers, we did not ban the posters. Permission to display them in the immigration halls was refused by the Immigration Office because of their effect on the flow of passengers. BAA has no control over these areas, which are entirely in the hands of the Immigration Office.

We are concerned to make sure that asylum seekers do get the information they need and we have taken the initiative to arrange for posters and notices to be displayed in the arrivals piers. We have therefore not been an obstacle to providing this information.

Steven Ollivant,
BAA plc,
130 Wilton Road,
London SW1V 1LQ.

FURTHER to your mention of The Boom Boom Room, staged here in 1992 (Surrey yarns, Women, April 9), the director did not tell the women in the cast to "take their tops off", and the student actresses did not state they felt taken advantage of; one actress did briefly dance topless, with consent. The play completed its scheduled run.

Prof David Meyer,
Department of Drama,
University of Manchester,
Manchester M13 9PL.

ISUPPOSE you employ Linda Grant to provoke silly old fossils like me into writing, but when she says "The Old Testament makes no mention of forgiveness" (April 11), I do wonder how she can have reached adolescence without hearing the story of Joseph, whose brothers left him in a pit to die. Many years later he forgave them with tears. When Ms Grant reaches her 18th birthday, I'll gladly give her a Bible.

(Rev) A J Ward,
6 Lower Forge,
Eardington, Salop WV16 5LQ.

The Darwin debate evolves

IAN KATZ (Monkey trial, April 11) and Linda Grant (Knee benders for the truth, April 11) amply illustrate the current confusion regarding the construction of a world view appropriate to modern times. For Grant: "To build a world based on human ethics and human values, rather than materialism and religion is the coming task." For the creationists: "But in the 21st century people will need a better principle than materialism and that's what I'm trying to develop."

These are curious bedfellows in opposition to materialism. But Richard Dawkins, for example, a leading advocate of materialism, allows impressive specialist expertise to distort a rounded treatment of wider philosophical questions.

We need a deeper understanding of things — not some new *hype* to replace old concepts, but an awareness that any such concept can only ever be relative. But if the universe is not the sort of place which can contain absolute truths, or unshakable theories, from whence do we derive the moral imperative? Grant beseeches us to acquire knowledge that we only have each other, and that moral codes must be built by consensus, mankind thereby saving itself rather than waiting to be saved. But again the spectre of the moral imperative rises: why should we do these things? To such questions the humanist can only appeal to shared values and a sense of right and wrong.

J P Green,
55 Benson Avenue,
London E8 3EE.

THE evolution versus creation controversy is basically a struggle between religious dogmatists and scientific dogmatists for social supremacy, particularly the right to have their views "taught" to children (as instilled as unquestionable

fact). Although the basic process of evolution is now well understood and generally accepted, the theory of evolution does not and cannot exclude the possibility of intelligent non-human intervention, especially in the puzzling development of the human species. This is or should be a strictly scientific issue, but it has been bedevilled by the unwarranted assumption that non-human intervention can only be divine intervention.

The debate will serve a useful purpose if it eventually reveals that religion and scientific materialism are equally inadequate as a basis for rational education and a rational world-view.

Philip Lloyd Lewis,
67F Mallard Road,
Bournemouth BH6 9PJ.

DARWINISM does not answer all the questions. There is the nagging problem of the speed of change, for instance. It has been claimed that if we had relied solely on chance mutations for our development then, mathematically, we'd all be still very similar to our amoebic ancestors.

If methods are developed for improving Darwin and filling in the gaps in evolutionary theory, then the present battle could be very creative. In any case, what is wrong with teaching the science as the history of argument and that it is still largely conducted at the whim of social and political pressures, and whoever is prepared to pay for research?

Mark Abraham,
188 Egerton Road North,
Manchester M16 6DB.

HAVE the Creationists ever noticed that chapter 2 of Genesis contradicts Chapter 1 of Genesis (compare 1:24 to 2:18 to 20, just for starters), and if so how do they reconcile this?

Dave Jason,
44 Shirley Road,
Freemantle,
Southampton SO15 3BU.

Looted by Lagos

FOR the Liberian conflict to have a meaningful solution, Nigerians must be removed from their peace-keeping roles (Fugitive Librarian warrior swears no surrender, April 11). Nigeria's military junta has been involved in Liberian internal affairs from the start.

Dr Irhim Babangida saw himself as a world statesman with the wisdom and oil money to meddle in others' affairs. Although the late Samuel Doe was rejected by his people, Babangida encouraged him to hang on to power by all means because he calculated that military head of states in neighbouring countries (Ghana, Liberia, Togo, Sierra Leone) may improve his own chance of perpetuating himself as civilian president of Nigeria.

Peace-keeping roles require a disciplined, intelligent army. I was told by a group of Liberians that ships departing from Lagos to Liberia were loaded with goods looted by the Nigerian army: from domestic stereo units to street light-poles with copper wire uprooted. What Nigeria lacks at home — clean hands, discipline, peace and order — cannot logically be offered to others.

Soji Lapite,
Medlar Street,
London SE5.

We scored too

WOLVERHAMPTON Wanderers local rivals to WBA, found their guardian angel in Sir Jack Hayward, a multi-millionaire who has injected cash into the club. Following your leader (April 12), we Baggies, as poorer neighbours, have a Guardian angel too. But are you subtly showing support for new, central Labour's fiscal prudence?

Scott Lavy,
Lancaster University,
Lancaster LA1 4ZA.

A Country Diary

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE: Fensall Forest is closely associated with the young children of Eglwyswyr school. Go there for a re-awakening of childhood. Firstly, there is the approach. From the Fensall end you follow a narrow road up, down and around Castell Henllys where you see Iron Age huts with Iron Age pigs rooting around. But you carry on, past snoring cats and yawning dogs to a ford. Having completed all these adventures you arrive at Pengell. It has oak trees of varied ages. Some stand like slim, fit giants ready to rise and fight for Arthur. Their height in some of the sheltered valleys is daunting and dizzy-making. Others have been coppiced. All the wood has been used. It may go to provide a habitat for beetles and spiders, birds and mammals. Or used to provide seats, works of art in themselves, reminiscent of the sculpture trail in the Forest of Dean. Yet more has been used for charcoal burning over the winter. Some goes for firewood to bring in cash. It is

Winning ticket

DENIS Vaughan's letter (April 12) stating that "no lottery has cost so much" reveals his reluctance to be put off by facts. It is bizarre to suggest that the lottery's running costs are fixed, and untrue that the capital cost "was only £49.5m". The lottery involves over 600 people employed full-time by Camelot, the training of over 75,000 retail staff and a great deal more. Capital costs are approaching £200m.

Camelot was awarded the licence in part as it submitted the lowest bid. It is the world's second-most efficient operator.

David Riggs,
Camelot Group plc,
30 Cockspur Street,
London SW1Y 5BL.

The ju

Chief Inspector of Police, Stephen Tomlinson, Michael Howard, and Michael Howard, to be...
...sent system. His ne...
...saw an undimmed t...
...embarrass. Photo...
...MARTIN ARGLES

Shakepeare goes from B...
...overs in LA...
...TAYLOR... the play...
...presented by Knots Landin...

سکتا من الاعمال

صحة من الامم

The judge they'd like to lock up

As Chief Inspector of Prisons, Stephen Tumim battled Whitehall, and Michael Howard, to build a decent system. His new book shows an undimmed talent to embarrass. Photograph by MARTIN ARGLES



The Joanna Coles interview

STEPHEN Tumim answers the door with the announcement that he has just refused to debate whether Prisons Work on Radio 4's World Tonight with the minister for prisons, Ann Wintford. "I interrupt Wintford," says Tumim, his wife, as she propels us briskly from under her feet in the kitchen towards his study.

"A terribly ugly woman, what," giggles Tumim as he leads the way to his desk at the head of the house, a crown's throw from Buckingham Palace. In the passage, he stumbles over a painting he thinks might be a Tissot and "worth a lot of money, I hope". Then he pours us both a sherry and announces the official way to address him now is as "this honourable Stephen Tumim. I don't use it myself of course, but the point is I'm no longer called a judge".

Much to the Home Secretary Michael Howard's relief, Stephen Tumim is no longer called Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons either. After eight years of consistently embarrassing the Government with a series of reports on the abysmal state of Britain's prisons, Tumim left the post last November, his contract unrenegotiated. But his talent to embarrass remains gloriously intact. Last Tuesday, one week after Howard's White Paper arguing that mandatory longer sentences would deter criminals, Tumim and a fellow group of legal experts published Prisons 2000, a book which argues precisely the opposite.

And yesterday his influence on the quality of prison life was felt yet again, with the Home Office announcement that the practice of "slopping out" had officially ended. The final pot was handed in at Armlay Jail in Leeds, prompting Paul Cavadinio of the Penal Affairs Consortium to comment: "It's a tribute to Judge Tumim's tenacity that he never ceased to harass the Government to improve sanitation." He added that without Tumim's persistence the prison service would still be faced with sanitary

facilities worse than those envisaged by the Victorians. But what exactly has Tumim been up to since his release? "Oh, working *really* hard," what," he says, eyes gleaming through his half-moon glasses. This is not a joke. Five minutes later, he's still chattering through his list of projects. There was the Channel 4 film in the Cayman Islands, a trip to St Helena "and back on a splendid ship to Cardiff," a trip to Uganda examining prisons, a series of interviews with collectors for the Royal Academy Magazine, his chairmanship of a mental health tribunal, the Charlie Douglas Home Fellowship to compare European jail sentences with ours; a research fellowship at "Teddy Hall" (St Edmund Hall, Oxford); a series of lectures at Cambridge; two series for BBC Television — one on European justice, the other on poverty — and finally, he's supposed to be writing a book called A Judge Goes To Prison. And he insists on eight hours sleep a night.

He stops for breath. "I'm overdoing it, aren't I? Retirement is okay if you're going to cabbage it, but if you're going to do things, you have to be selective. I haven't been, have I?"

Though Howard's decision not to renew his contract could hardly have come as a surprise, Tumim seems mildly disorientated by the decision. He was disappointed to be passed over for chairmanship of the new Criminal Cases Review Authority and I wonder if he misses his old job? "I miss not having an office. Working at home, I feel I'm intruding during the day. I also felt I had unfinished business. I'm sorry I didn't get my idea of industrial prisons — where prisoners work for a real wage — accepted. It's not sufficiently politically attractive, you know." He glances across the room, with his leg fire bubbling and its bookshelves bursting with lovingly collected first editions of Lawrence Sterne and Max Beerbohm: "I did think I must rush and write a book straight away. It's supposed to be about how I arrived at my views, but do you know, I've just read through bits of it and I find it boring. Ha ha, what?"

But as penal reformers discovered — contrary to their initial expectations — Tumim's views on prison are anything but boring. He is a firm believer in community service and rehabilitation rather than the short, sharp shock. Also, serving his time as chief inspector, he watched the prison population rise by almost 20 per cent. How did he

feel about that? "I see the history of prisons as a pendulum, there are good periods and bad periods, progress and no progress. During the period after the 1980 disorders, there were some very helpful reports by Lord Woolf [Tumim contributed to Woolf's report on Strangeways] and things looked good. But now the pendulum has swung the other way. We have gone backwards. The things I see mattering, humanity and education, have been diminished."

Why? Surely all the blame cannot be laid at the Conservatives' door, after all it was Douglas Hurd, the then Home Secretary, who appointed Tumim with a specific brief to go public on what he found. "That was a different time. Douglas Hurd appointed me to give people more knowledge about the prison system. It was a very liberal period, experiments were taking place under a different culture. But the ideas are different now. Money's been cut, most prisons have been cut back by something like 40 per cent. Let me give you my short lecture on prisons. And he embarks on a passionate defence of justice rather than punishment, education rather than minimum sentences.

"How you deal with crime depends on what sort of people you send to prison. We tend to send men, under 25, who come from broken homes and did very badly at school because they didn't try very hard and played truant, what one might call jobs. They're not very dangerous, and they desperately need proper training, moral, social and academic education. It's a very demanding and hard job for the prison service. If you cut down the money, you are going to store up more crimes for the future. These boys will come out hit, not trained and not fit for work in the community we live in. He pauses for dramatic effect. "And they're going to be with us for another 50 years."

So what does he recommend? "Oh, the cure for prisons lies in pre-primary education," then he laughs. "Ha ha, what?" There is a knock on the door. "Come in!" "Apparently you were on the news after all," cries Wintford. "Sarah's just rung to say from Devon, it must have been Channel 4, anyway they did a huge amount, it just wasn't on this horrid news."

"Was it offensive or indelicate?" "She said you were very good on justice."

"Hurry!" proclaims Tumim. "More sherry?" asks Wintford. "No thank you. What time's supper?" "Eight o'clock. It's only baked potatoes and sausages I'm afraid."

"Good oh," says his honour. "I don't passionately hate him," he chuckles. "I've had lunch with him since I've left, but it's perfectly obvious we don't agree on policy. I don't have any strong feelings about Michael Howard. Ha ha, what?"

He does, however, recall a strong feeling of hopelessness absorbed from going round certain prisons. "I always remember one young man. He was 17 and in for nicking motor cars. I asked him why, and he said he had a girlfriend and a child but no money, and that when he came out, he'd probably do it again. I asked him if he had any ambition and he said he'd like to work for someone he respected. But he didn't know anyone he respected. I felt he was not unintelligent and one felt a total hopelessness about the whole thing. "Would there be more hope under Labour?" "I don't know. I can't get involved in party politics. I'm critical of current policies."

Fiddling with his bow tie, Tumim appears an odd mixture, somewhere between an old-fashioned Tory and a patrician Liberal, who loves lunching at the Garrick Club before striding back home down the Mall. "Oh, my views aren't liberal so much as those of activists, to close the gap be-

tween prisoners and the community," he insists. For a long time, Tumim rose without trace. A barrister specialising in divorce, he did not take silk, and shuffled on to become a circuit judge. It was not a particular ambition. "Oh no, I simply thought I was working too hard so I became a judge, ha ha." He was 57 when Hurd eventually plucked him from relative anonymity and gave him a high profile, something he clearly relishes. Why then does he think he turned out to be such a remarkable inspector? "I'm very curious. I'm fairly independent."

So what, I wonder, doesn't he like about himself? "I have a low boredom threshold, I get bored easily and then I disengage." Did he mind the gradual freighting out by Whitehall? "I'm not too worried what people think, I'm fairly thick-skinned, what he ha." But didn't he feel exasperated by his sense of things going backwards? "I accept politicians have their own agenda which is concerned with votes. It's different to mine. I wanted only to report what I saw in prisons."

Over the baked potatoes and a bottle of Saint-Emilion 1982, he ponders once more on what he will do now. Holidays are spent walking in Scotland or Cornwall, though he is "very fond of the West Indies". Week-ends are spent with his four granddaughters. Two of his three daughters, Olivia and Emma live near London (both are profoundly deaf) while Meilida, an artist, lives in the Orkneys. But what about his weaknesses? "I suppose if I were to call myself anything I would say I am a journalist."

He found the prison service in Uganda both liberal and caring, though there wasn't enough money even to buy the prisoners a football to kick around. "But their manner was impressive." Then he went to St Helena's, where they have a grand total of six prisoners. "I arrived at the prison and the door was wide open and the officers had gone out to tea. I said to the inmates 'Why don't you escape?' They said, 'Oh it's Sunday afternoon. Where would we go?' "Time for the nine o'clock news," says Wintford.

Shakespeare goes from Bard to verse in LA

GARY TAYLOR sees the playwright reinvented by Knots Landing's finest

GREW up in South Philadelphia, the ageing actor explained, his once rich voice a rough neighbourhood. But I was more afraid of Shakespeare than I was of Jack Dillinger. Shakespeare wrote high-falutin' words that were only understood by high-falutin' people and when you read him you found out you were stupid."



The hit of the evening was a group of elementary school children performing Pyramus and Thisbe, including a very small, very cute black boy as the Lion.

That ain't no way to treat your rabbi

RONALD BERGAN on the Gentile portrayal of Jews in US movies

MARLON Brando got it partly wrong on CNN the other night. In discussing the portrayal of Jews in the movies, he could not see that they have been almost as racially stereotyped as "the nigger and the greaseball..." He went on to claim that "we never saw the likes because they know perfectly well that that's where you draw the wagons around."

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The Vatican recently issued a list of recommended movies. The Guardian asked representatives of other denominations to nominate their top 10 films and explain why. Below, DEREK MALCOLM analyses the surprising results

The greatest story ever told

ANY FILM BUFF wishing to convert and wondering which religion would be the most appropriate really only has one choice. The Catholic church's list is head and shoulders above the rest. It's good to see that the Vatican has mellowed after years of repression and censorship. Admittedly the list, sanctioned by the Pontifical Council, has been thought about longer and harder than those of other religions, who were asked by the Guardian to come up with films at short notice. But who would have thought that Pasolini, the Marxist, would be included for his once-controversial Gospel According To Saint Matthew, or proclaimed agnostic Ingmar Bergman's The Seventh Seal, let alone Britain's The Lavender Hill Mob?

from my own church, the C of E. Amazingly, the Richard Gere/Julia Roberts Pretty Woman fol-de-rol, the fairly dire comedy Nuns On The Run and Ask A Policeman, the old Will Hay farce, are on the list. The Life Of Brian, given such a hard time by some churchmen at the time of its release, is now officially forgiven. The British Humanist Association also include The Life Of Brian. Not so surprising in their case. They have opted for the life-affirming and simply pleasurable. Top of the list is Singin' In The Rain. Good to see Juzo Itami's Tampopo, a rare film from Japan, mostly about food and sex. The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order have provided an intriguing list. Two controversial Christian movies — The Life Of Brian and Scorsese's The Last Temptation Of Christ get a mention (the only Scorsese film on anyone's list, despite his redemptive efforts). There's also Groundhog Day — an inspired choice when you think about its lateral take on reincarnation. Curiously, only one Eastern film

gets in — Why Did Bodhidharma Leave For The West? (South Korea). The National Council for Hindu Temples did better in this respect, including Mira Nair's Salaam Bombay!, the Indian classic Mother India and Sardar but — would you credit it? — Spielberg's ET as well as Schindler's List. The Chief Rabbi's office produced an eclectic list, alongside Schindler's List and The Chosen (from the Chaim Potok novel and not the awful Ozon sequel), there is also the recent Shawshank Redemption, and Rain Man — inspirational if not religious. The Muslim list is an interesting mix — especially the choice of La Haine, last year's controversial French film about three young people fighting the police in a Parisian housing estate. But it's a shame nobody thought of the great Satyajit Ray. Most of the lists prove that not everybody has as copious a pile of movies to call upon as film critics, so Citizen Kane is mentioned only once. Oz's Tokyo Story — one of the great humanist movies — not at all; and the kind of masterworks that tend to get again and again on to Sight And Sound's list of choices from the world's critics and film-makers, published each decade, get shortish shrift. But all the lists make some kind of sense, even the silly old C of E's, determined at all costs to be jolly and populist. And the Catholic list is there for everyone to emulate; this is the kind of collection everyone should see, before, after or during conversion.



Python's progress... Life Of Brian now has official sanction from the Church of England. The Buddhists and Humanists dig it too

Catholics



The Vatican's list has three categories: Religion, Values and Art.

- RELIGION
- The Passion of Christ
 - The Passion of Joan of Arc
 - La Passione di Cristo
 - Flowers of St Francis
 - The Gospel According to Matthew (Above)
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
- VALUES
- The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments
- ART
- The Ten Commandments
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 - The Ten Commandments
 - The Ten Commandments

Muslims



Member of the Imams and mosques Council, the Muslim College and the Sharia (Muslim law) Council together with a number of visitors commend the films listed below. They do not call on anyone to see them as a religious duty, but they are regarded as a source of inspiration for their portrayal of an exemplary person or as a celebrating of an ethical value. Some of our visitors thought the element of entertainment should not be ignored.

- 1 The Message (above) — the story of the birth of Islam.
- 2 Omar al Mukhtar — the story of anti-colonial struggle that ended in a glorious but inevitable defeat.
- 3 Moders Times — a depiction of the dehumanising effect of industrialisation.
- 4 Bicycle Thieves — for its message of hope in a desperate situation.
- 5 La Haine (Mab) — for tapping the depth of human goodness in a vicious world.
- 6 Mughal — Azim (The Great Mughal Akbar of India) — the glory of muslim rule.
- 7 Palestine (The Innocent) — the story of a woman accused falsely of being guilty of moral failures.
- 8 Anwar, Akbar, Anthony — a multi-ethnic story of three brothers who were separated and brought up in families of different religions, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Moral: we are brothers however different our faiths might be.
- 9 Al Nasir Salah al-Din (Saladin) — the story of conflict between civilisations and the interface between religions.
- 10 Uarda Hallen (Uarda) — a portrayal of the plight of womanhood in modern Muslim society.

Blabbed lists are in no particular order.

Methodists



The Methodist Church: This selection is chosen by some of our ministers and is in no particular order. We like well-shot films with good acting and good dialogue that are prepared to explore the human predicament. The Magnificent Seven is a fine moral tale. One of the minister's polled saw Schindler's List in Golders Green. The cinema was full of Jews weeping copiously, and he found it quite overwhelming.

- Amadeus
- Schindler's List
- Sean and Semabillity
- Forrest Gump (above)
- A Chinese Slave
- Shadowlands
- The Magnificent Seven
- Inheritors of the Earth
- The Wizard Of Oz
- The Wizard Of Oz
- Little Women

Hindus



The National Council for Hindu Temples: Traditional Indian films last three hours or more. Their purpose is to entertain, and in that sense they provide a means of escapism. Our choices would re-emerge the body and the mind, as well as the spirit within. In the process of selecting our favourite films we considered both Hindu and non-Hindu productions, and we hope that the readers might find time to enjoy them.

- 1 Gandhi (above)
- 2 ET
- 3 Mother India
- 4 Nine Hours From Now
- 5 Gandhi
- 6 The Mahabharata
- 7 Schindler's List
- 8 Ben Hur
- 9 Schindler's List

Jews



A straw poll of the Chief Rabbi's office produced this list. Sorry we couldn't stick to 10 — there are so many great movies — and we were unable to decide on a running order. Many of the films chosen reflect specifically Jewish themes, and also contain positive moral messages.

- Schindler's List (above)
- The Shawshank Redemption
- The Chosen
- Garden of the First-Century
- Pale Male
- Witness
- The Piano
- The Piano
- The Piano
- The Piano

Buddhists



Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, one of Britain's biggest Buddhist movements: The films in this list represent honesty and people getting to grips with themselves. Some of them are of an explicitly Buddhist theme, such as Beyond Rangoon and Why Did Bodhidharma Leave For The West?, and the others are about people learning by being honest with themselves.

- 1 Wind Of Oz (above)
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 3 Why Did Bodhidharma Leave For The West?
- 4 Wings Of Desire
- 5 The Last Temptation Of Christ
- 6 Close Encounters Of The Third Kind
- 7 Beyond Rangoon
- 8 Les Enfants du Paradis
- 9 Life Of Brian
- 10 Little Buddha

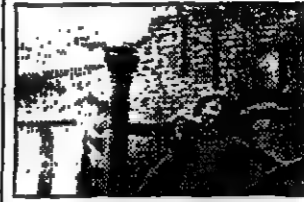
C of E



There was no time to set up a working party and get this debated by the General Synod, even if it had wanted to. So there is nothing official about this list. It was put together by asking people in the Communications Unit at Church House to list 10 favourite films and then arguing about them. In the end, we believe the list has something for anyone and depicts many aspects of Christian faith: reformations of life, perseverance in the face of adversity, faith, hope, charity and, last but not least, a sense of humour.

- Pretty Women (above)
- Saving Private Ryan
- The Firm
- Life Of Brian
- The Firm
- The Firm
- The Firm
- The Firm
- The Firm
- The Firm

Humanists



The British Humanist Association: As Humanists we like films that celebrate life and human achievement, that balance the glib-wit with well-earned concern for others. What's wrong with pleasure and fun? So Singin' In The Rain has to be number one for us. Films with a reasoned approach to ethical dilemmas suit us too — hence Stephen Frears's movie of Roddy Doyle's novel The Snapper. We've included the Life Of Brian, but we would say that, wouldn't we...?

- 1 Singin' In The Rain (above)
- 2 The Firm
- 3 The Firm
- 4 Life Of Brian
- 5 The Firm
- 6 The Firm
- 7 The Firm
- 8 The Firm
- 9 The Firm
- 10 The Firm

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14 - 18 May, Grand Opera House BELFAST 01232 241919

21 - 25 May, New Victoria Theatre WOKING 01483 761144

Tomorrow's Waterworld

Television

Stuart Jeffries

IF ONLY Thales had been a special advisor to Yorkshire Water. The first ever philosopher believed water was the primary substance out of which everything else was formed. Surely he'd have found a way of reverting the vast quantities of air in Yorkshire reservoirs to their original form so people could bathe untroubled in Leeds this summer. More likely he'd have held out to be chairman of ICL.

But the best Yorkshire Water can manage is to back a firm which has made a new valve key. It was such a good invention that its producers called it Wizkey and entered it for The Prince of Wales Award for Innovation (Tomorrow's World, BBC).

Valves connecting Britain's water-pipe network are hard to distinguish. According to presenter Howard Stabelford, the wrong valves are sometimes opened, increasing the likelihood of leaks.

This was not reassuring. A nationwide summer drought is looming and even the prospect aren't sure which valves are which. But the Wizkey tells a water worker the identity of a valve, enabling companies to spot leaks and mend or supply.

Which is just as well, since we are going to need a lot more water in the fight against crime. Splash! Take that, you rotter! Not ordinary water but smart water — a product which, when wired to a house's alarm system, automatically sprays intruders and whatever they're pinching. The water is laced with a chemical compound that fluoresces when exposed to ultraviolet rays. This gives police a link between suspect and crime scene, and gives the criminal's face a rather attractive marbling effect in the right light.

The best-named finalist was AgriSense, which presumably has little to do with beef farming. It had made a biological pest control system to destroy the Pink Bollworm, which lives on cotton crops. It was called Selibate — AgriSense's marketing department needs

CLASSICAL

Casken premieres Royal Festival Hall

Nestled between Vaughan Williams's Lark Ascending and Holst's The Planets, the first performance of John Casken's Sortilege, commissioned by the Philharmonia, seemed thoroughly at home. Casken's music has shifted markedly in recent years and with the last two orchestral scores that he has written, the Violin Concerto heard at last year's Proms, and now Sortilege, his preoccupations now seem decidedly home-grown, both in their literary associations and their sense of place. Casken's sense of structure and musical timing grow ever more assured. In the new work the orchestral writing, for a very large orchestra which includes such exotica as

Martin Sherman's red hot comedy is set in 1940s Cairo

The secrets of the East

MARTIN SHERMAN'S Some Sunny Day at London's Hampstead Theatre is an antic, slightly surreal, comedy about the possibility of tapping into one's real feelings while being an outsider in a foreign land.

The setting is a cluttered Cairo flat, beautifully evoked in William Dudley's design. In 1942, with Rommel at the city gates, But Sherman is less concerned with military tactics than the obsessive behaviour of a group of people at a moment of national crisis.

Horatio, who works in military propaganda, has fallen for a local belly-dancer to the dismay of his wife, Emily, who casts voodoo spells over the object of his passion.

Meanwhile, Alec, a stiff-upper-lip young officer, is torn

between the desert war and his passion for a supposed Kiwi journalist called Robin. And the duchess, a mysterious European emigre, stakes everything on catching the midnight train to Palestine.

Sherman paints a vivid picture of a manic world in which everyone is considered a potential spy. But his real point seems to be that, in this topsy-turvy society, people wake up to their true feelings. Just as Horatio is driven by erotic obsession to wife-murder, so Alec acknowledges his gayness and the duchess buries guilt over the death of her fellow-Jewish lesbian lover.

The denouement, involving extra-terrestrial flights of fancy, is too fey to be good. But the play has fascinating links with Sherman's most famous play, Bent, in which the hero discovers the possibility of love while a Dachau prisoner.

It is a frenetic but engaging play and, in Roger Michell's atmosphere-soaked production, it is acted to the hilt by an ace cast. Corin Redgrave as Horatio gives a remarkable display of sweating fixation and sexual possession, while Cheryl Campbell as his vengeful wife is a model of derangement. Rupert Everett is also ethereally funny as the prophetic journalist who, as he says at one point, is more Gertrude than T.E. Lawrence.

Details: 0171 722 9301

Michael Billington

This review appeared in some editions of yesterday's broadsheet.

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صحنه من الامل

Simon Wiesenthal has been reviled as much by the Jewish establishment as the Nazi war criminals he has spent his life tracking down. In an exclusive extract from her new book, HELLA PICK explains why

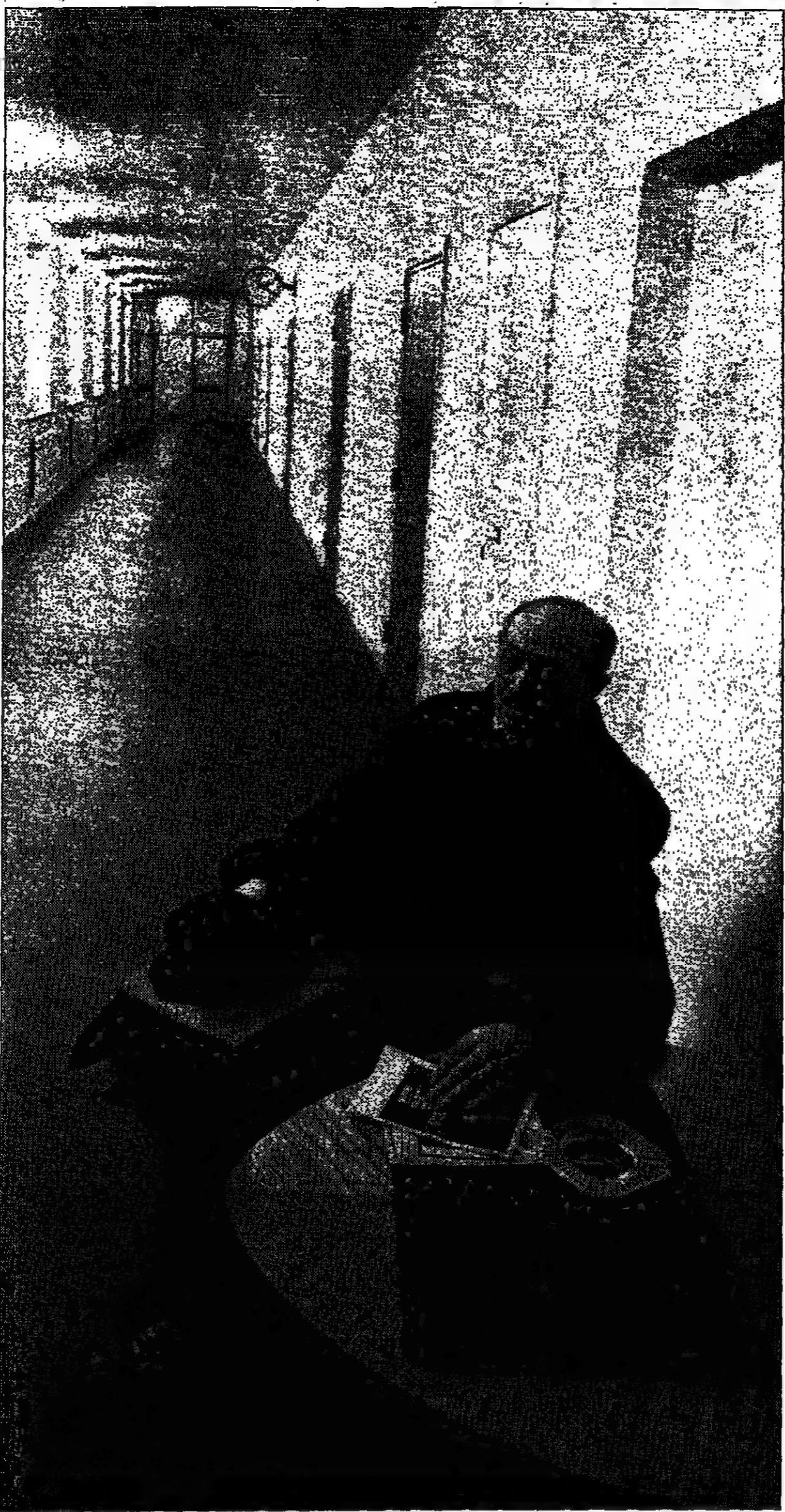
Hunter hero is now the haunted

VIENNA'S nondescript apartment district, though only minutes walk from its imperial palaces, is outside the normal tourist trek. There is nothing distinguished or distinguishing about Number 6, Salztor-gasse, a tall box-like block of flats. Hard to find because it is so discreetly small, one of its dozen or so nameplates carries the simple legend "Documentationszentrum". You press the buzzer to be identified. Once inside there is no foyer, just a narrow stone-paved passage to a slow-moving lift. Up to the second floor, and you find a bored policeman lounging on the staircase guarding the entrance to three shabby furnished rooms. lined from floor to ceiling with box-files, books, and framed notices to Simon Wiesenthal. This has been the Nazi-hunter's cramped habitat for the past 21 years. Before that, for 15 years, he worked from a nearby building where he had still less space and creature comforts.

Visitors meeting Wiesenthal for the first time are invariably surprised by these surroundings. Even if they are aware that he does not preside over an extensive sleuthing network, they still expect to find him in a grander setting, more in line with his international renown. But they are wrong. The threadbare office, the old desk heaped high with papers, the minuscule staff, the battered car he drives between the office and his equally modest suburban home all reflect this singular man's character, and his chosen mode of operation in his unending quest to prevent Holocaust amnesia.

Material surroundings and the trappings of running a significant organisation are alien and unimportant to Wiesenthal. This Jew from Galicia in southern Poland deliberately chose in 1945 to remain inside the Holocaust capsule, daily to relive his own war-time experiences in labour and death camps, and to feel, beyond mere intellectual reflection, the suffering of all the victims who failed to survive the Nazi depredations. He recognised that this was bound to be the only existence. But it fits both his individualism bred from constant embattlement, and also his belief that he was preserved for only one purpose: to deter the emergence of powerful neo-Nazi movements by rallying support for the arrest of Hitler's mass murderers and bringing them to trial. Vengeance has not been his motive — he is adamantly opposed to the liquidation of war criminals, and is even against the death penalty. Punishment can never equal the crimes committed by a mass murderer. What matters, Wiesenthal has always argued, is to subject such people to the due process of justice. A court of law is capable of delivering evidence of individual guilt, and can establish the facts about the

Holocaust and about genocide beyond the reach of historical revisionism. Firmly rejecting the concept of mass guilt, he believes with single-minded passion that this process alone can forewarn future generations against neo-Nazism. Add to this Wiesenthal's conviction that war crimes trials are a vital tool of the healing process towards reconciliation, and it becomes easier to understand the grandiose yet tunnel vision that has consumed him for half a century. Now 87, Wiesenthal's only other craving is for recognition of his achievements, of being seen as an uncomfortable conscience that has forced the international community, particularly Germany and Austria, to confront the lessons of the Holocaust. Though he is no newcomer to controversy, the recurring attacks on his integrity never cease to wound him deeply. By way of reassurance, he is proud of every honour that comes his way and has come to believe in his own mystique. I knew very little of all this when Lord Weidenfeld proposed that I should write Simon Wiesenthal's biography. Wiesenthal's name is virtually synonymous with Nazi-hunting. Love him or hate him, he is one of the outstanding individuals which this century has produced. Yet there were only his own two volumes of patchwork memoirs — *The Murderers Amongst Us* and *Justice Not Vengeance* — and there was no comprehensive account or assessment of his life. Before a final decision to write the biography was taken, I went to Vienna to meet Wiesenthal. It was obvious that the project would need his co-operation, but I was equally firm that he must not be allowed any editorial control. If he was only interested in eulogy, the exercise would be pointless. Like many others, I was initially taken aback by his surroundings. I was also surprised by his warmth, his humour and his emotionalism. And I was gripped by the vivid language he used to describe not only the long-past, but also contemporary events. Like many others I was impressed with his ability to spark attention and provoke thought. Under different circumstances, Wiesenthal would surely have become a stellar figure in public relations. He agreed to co-operate with me, insisting only that he should be allowed to check the manuscript for factual error. Of course there is often only a narrow divide between the correction of fact and editorial interference. But he kept to his word. He gave me as much time as I asked, and this added up to many days of questioning. He urged his wife and daughter to speak with me, and gave me unrestricted access to his archives. Though he knew that I was also interviewing some of his sharpest, toughest critics, he never once commented on the way I was researching the book. More



One man's lonely war: Wiesenthal has faced sniping from the World Jewish Congress as well as from fascist sympathisers

He is not driven by vengeance. He does not even support the death penalty. He believes he was preserved for one purpose — to deter the emergence of neo-Nazi movements and bring Hitler's mass murderers to trial



Having survived the extermination camps, Wiesenthal was driven by the need to keep their memory alive

Photograph by LEIF ENGBERG

WJC's resources behind the search. But nothing came of it. Instead, this incident fuelled a growing bitterness between Wiesenthal and the WJC. It was only in 1957 that Israel's secret service, Mossad, acting on information from the public prosecutor in Frankfurt, activated the search for Eichmann in Argentina which led to his capture three years later by a team led by the Mossad's chief at the time, Isser Harel. During that period, Wiesenthal had sporadic contact with a Mossad team in Austria, but otherwise had no connection with this decisive stage of the hunt for Eichmann.

In 1963, Wiesenthal published his book, *I Hunted Eichmann*. This gave a somewhat overblown account of his endeavours up to 1954, but made no claims beyond that year, and was emphatic that many hands had been involved in Eichmann's capture. The book caught the popular imagination. It brought Wiesenthal his first taste of fame and was the beginning of the legend that grew around him as a superman Nazi-hunter. It prompted him to move to Vienna where he set up his Documentation Centre. He set his sights much higher now than he had done in Linz. His office in Vienna would "represent Austria's Jews in combating anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism by presenting historical material; to collaborate with the Austrian and German judicial authorities, and with Jewish organisations involved with clearing up the question of war criminals; and to undertake research to set straight the historical record."

But if Wiesenthal thought he had at last secured firm foundations for his life's work, he was mistaken. For many years to come he was reviled in Austria for daring to attack the country's political establishment for flirting with former Nazis. This came to a head in a long-lasting, embittered confrontation with Austria's socialist Chancellor, Bruno Kreisky.

Neither man espoused any glory from a combat in which the two vied with each other to cast doubts on their integrity. Kreisky's political beliefs have concluded that his anti-Wiesenthal offensive is a blot on the socialist leader's record. They gave frank replies to my questions, and opened the inner recesses of the Kreisky archive. Today, Wiesenthal is honoured in Austria as a national icon who rightly demanded that Austria acknowledge its complicity with Nazism instead of claiming, as it had done for almost 50 years, that it was Hitler's victim. He has been awarded Austria's highest honours, and was chosen to speak at the UN last year on Austria's behalf to mark the Year of Tolerance.

Wiesenthal's conflict with Kreisky had lasted until the former Chancellor's death. It was rapidly succeeded by a new battle — this time between Wiesenthal and the leadership of the WJC, which has brought in reinforcements by way of the ex-Mossad man, Isser Harel, and of the two Nazi hunters, Serge and Beate Klarsfeld. The trigger for this battle was Wiesenthal's refusal to accuse Kurt Waldheim of war crimes — though he branded him a liar unfit to hold public office — and his argument that pressure from the WJC against Waldheim's election as Austrian head of state only served to rekindle anti-Semitism in Austria. The

WJC asserts that Wiesenthal bungled in his initial attempts to search for the truth about Waldheim, and afterwards bought himself respect in Austria by objecting to the international campaign against Waldheim.

There is evidence that the WJC's antagonism towards Wiesenthal has far deeper roots than the Waldheim affair, going even further back than the Eichmann case. Even so, I was taken aback by the sheer venom and determination to destroy Wiesenthal's reputation that I found in New York at the WJC headquarters, and in Washington with Eli Rosenbaum, former secretary of the WJC and now head of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations. Rosenbaum is co-author of *Strawman*, a book published in 1988, which alleges that Wiesenthal engaged in a cover-up for Waldheim. These people describe Wiesenthal as a tragic figure, a charlatan with a long record of failure and ineptitude. They left me in little doubt that if I failed to subscribe to their views, they would interpret my biography of Wiesenthal as a whitewash. Rosenbaum and his allies recycled the same condemnation a few weeks ago in a German TV programme, which backfired on them because a spate of newspapers immediately sprung to Wiesenthal's

There has been an unrelenting tide of venom directed at Wiesenthal by the New York Jewish élite to destroy his reputation

defence. All it seems to have achieved is a rekindling of interest in Wiesenthal's achievements.

Wiesenthal remains alert to the dangers of neo-Nazism, and combative, still campaigning for "justice not vengeance" but also bent on defending his reputation. He knows that the Vienna Documentation Centre will not survive him. But it will not be allowed to disappear into oblivion. The Wiesenthal Centre in the US — which bears his name but otherwise has no formal link with his work — will inherit his archive and rebuild his Documentation Centre office in its Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles as a lasting record of his endeavours and of his relevance to contemporary conflicts and racial discrimination.

There will certainly be more to Wiesenthal's legacy: his message is not unrelated to the growing international acceptance of war crimes trials because of their intrinsic importance in documenting the unbearable. Similarly, his campaign for justice has contributed to the widely-held view that such trials are an essential part of eventual reconciliation in Bosnia, Rwanda or wherever else there is evidence of genocide and ethnic cleansing. It is too early to know how future generations will see Wiesenthal. But it is not too soon to understand the significant contribution that he has made towards allowing the post-war generation of Germans and Austrians to come to terms with the Holocaust. When the history of the past 50 years is written, Wiesenthal will surely count among its heroes.

Hella Pick is a former diplomatic editor of the Guardian and a foreign correspondent. Her biography, Simon Wiesenthal, a Life in Search of Justice, is published on Monday by Weidenfeld & Nicolson at £20

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Dan Wolf

A vision of the Village

ON OCTOBER 26, 1955 the first edition of New York's Village Voice was published. Its founding group included a sometime psychologist, Ed Fancher, a roving journalist from Sheffield, John Wilcock, the novelist Norman Mailer, and, as editor, Dan Wolf, who has died aged 80. Mailer provided the title and with Fancher put up the \$10,000 launch money. The weekly newspaper that Wolf edited from the 1950s into the 1970s was to transform radical journalism in the West.

Greenwich Village in the mid-1950s was an enclave for radicals, artists and people on holiday from the Eisenhower America of conformity, Jim Crow racism and red-baiting. It was also the focus of a city that had inherited the artistic avant garde from the wreckage of post-war Europe, and added bebop, abstract expressionism, new theatre, new writing. This was Wolf, attracted to the area, an itinerant in search of art, life and community but no paper defined that community.

Wolf was a New Yorker, born on the Upper West Side, the son of an antique dealer, who had died in his fifties and plunged the family into genteel poverty. Dan Wolf had followed the American Bohemian trail to pre-war Europe, and the wartime path to the

Pacific with the intelligence section of the United States Army Air Force. Post-war he studied via a government grant to ex-servicemen at the New School of Social Research in Greenwich Village. It was there that he met Fancher and Norman Mailer. The novelist and future editor had adjacent flats in Greenwich Village.

By the mid-1950s Mailer was a famous, controversial novelist while Wolf remained a 40-year-old ex-serviceman in search of a career. The Voice was to provide it. The first edition sold 200 copies and in its early days, as it lost \$1,000 a week, it was widely assumed to be communist, since it ran articles on folk singers.

With the easy benefit of hindsight, two things stand out from Wolf's early Voices. The first is their parochialism. It was very much the local paper, detailing new coffee shops, dry cleaners, and rent outrages. The second, was its conservatism, as Mailer, within three months of the launch, proclaimed in his regular, if shortlived, Voice column.

But what Wolf succeeded in doing was to crystallise a community, via a paper. For those who were artists, poets or jazz musicians the Voice provided a forum, a point of contact, a definition of style, just as the New Yorker had done in the interwar years. By June



Crystallising a community... the Village Voice put Dan Wolf at the heart of radical journalism in New York

1966 the paper had instituted its annual off-Broadway theatre awards, going then to the likes of Shelley Winters and Jason Robards Jr. At a time of paranoia it offered a form of politics that slipped under that Cold War ideological radar screen which pinpointed reds and subversives. Wolf's persona, the tweed-jacketed, pipe smoking liberal was disarming in itself.

The Greenwich Village of the late-1950s was a place with still thriving local industry, a Tammany Hall political machine, and the threat of a vast new four-lane highway running through the core of the area. Wolf aligned the paper with the successful battle against the freeway, and became a friend of a rising young "reform" politician, Ed Koch. Tammany was organised labour, good fellows, and blue

collar. Koch then was a trailblazer for the style of later decades: middle class radicalism and single issue politics.

By the end of the decade Wolf was editing a paper that had taken on writers like Nat Hentoff, the cartoonist Jules Feiffer and the film critic — and film-maker — Jonas Mekas. By the early 1960s old Tammany was crippled, and in 1963 a daily newspaper strike triggered an explosion in the Voice's circulation. Soon after, the civil rights and anti-war movement produced a wave of papers that used Wolf's Voice format for more radical ends. Wolf, an ideological child of the 1940s and a man of the 1950s, gradually slipped out of sympathy with the times. Yet the paper remained one of the new politics' principal forums, and culturally recorded the process

of Living Theatre, Timothy Leary, Warhol's Factory and women's liberation into the era of Watergate.

By then it had a circulation of over 150,000; a one-time parish paper now billing itself as "the weekly newspaper of New York", and boasting a healthy profit margin.

But Wolf and Fancher — Mailer had parted company in the 1950s and Wilcock in the 1960s — wanted some financial reward for their efforts. So, while remaining on the paper, they sold 90 per cent of the company to a socialist politician, Carter Burden. Four years later, to Wolf's chagrin, the Voice was merged into Clay Felner's New York magazine company. Wolf briefly encountered the beautiful people before being effectively ousted from the Voice. In 1977 the Voice began its nine-year

residency within Rupert Murdoch's empire. That year too Ed Koch won the New York mayoralty — with Murdoch's backing — and took on Wolf as an adviser. Radicalism had given way to neo-conservatism, just as the 1950's Village mix of blue collar, garrets and beats had yielded to a 1970's blend of galleries, lofts and yuppies.

In 1980 Koch lost office, but Wolf remained as a confidant and adviser. The Voice Wolf shaped was a forum and a catalyst; the forerunner of 1990s radical papers, 1980s style glossies, and listings magazines from New York to Bangkok. He leaves his wife, a daughter and a son.

Nigel Fountain
Daniel Wolf, journalist, born May 25, 1915; died April 11, 1996

Robert Mellors

Glad to be gay — and radical

BOB MELLORS who has been murdered in Warsaw at the age of 46, was a founder member of the British Gay Liberation Front (GLF). In the summer of 1970 he visited New York with a fellow gay student from the London School of Economics, and they were so impressed by American gay political militancy that, on their return, they called a meeting at LSE to set up a similar movement. Soon meetings grew to several hundred strong, and this hugely successful initiative inaugurated a two-year period of outrageous militancy.

One of the high points was the invasion of a Festival of Light rally at Westminster Central Hall in the autumn of 1971, when Cliff Richard and other speakers were horrified by scenes of mayhem as "queers" danced a can-can and "repeating" gays gave fake testimony. There were also "kiss-ins" in public parks, demonstrations and street theatre, leading, on occasion, to court appearances at which the legal proceedings were themselves mocked and parodied.

Although GLF was probably most effective when at its most theatrical, Bob himself was a deeply serious, shy and thoughtful person, whose influence — in a radically democratic movement with no leaders but many flamboyant personalities — was an intellectual and conciliatory one. When splits inevitably occurred between revolutionaries and moderates, those who favoured a strategy of "radical drag", he wrote a pamphlet attempting to bring the warring sides together seeking to preserve the unity of the movement.

Indeed, in the long term, although GLF as an organisation burnt itself out, its vision — and here Bob played a key role — was the start of growing confidence and political determination in the lesbian and gay community, almost creating the basis for this community as it exists today in all its variety.

Bob came from a religious home, and was at LSE during a period of political upheaval, but having completed his studies, he rejected both the established routes to success and any cut and dried ideological solutions to the questions

that troubled him. (I remember him sitting in my kitchen and worrying about the unhelpfulness of Louis Althusser's famous essay *Ideology and State Apparatus* as a guide to moral conduct.) His philosophical quest resulted in a growing fascination with the central European communist and guru Charlotte Bach, who spent the second half of his life as a woman. Bob pursued exhaustively research into Bach's life and work, whose writings re-worked Darwinian theory in a more hedonistic and less utilitarian direction.

Bob, who was at that time working at the Electric Cinema box office in the Portobello Road, would travel long distances to interview surviving friends of Bach, sometimes surprising them with revelations of the transformation whereby Carl became Charlotte after his wife's death. Bob dedicated himself to gaining public recognition for Bach's work and had completed a major biography of this extraordinary character, but had not yet found a publisher for it at the time of his death.

In recent years he had found happiness in Poland. There he felt that a more old-fashioned society in which men and women led rather separate lives made possible a greater variety of emotional relationships between men. It is therefore a tragic irony that his death (apparently during a burglary in his flat) may be seen as part of the "Westernisation" of his adopted country with an attendant rise in crime.

Elizabeth Wilson



Mellors: from LSE to Poland

Robert Mellors, gay activist, born October 28, 1949; died March 22, 1996

Ian Spurling

Dressing for the dance

IAN Spurling, who has died aged 69, after suffering a heart attack, came to London from his native South Australia to study theatre design at the Slade School of Art in the early 1960s. He was supported by a grant from an Australian newspaper for which he was expected to report back on the art scene in England — though, once here, he was often too busy to do so.

From the first, Ian was an exhibitionist. With his small grant he continually changed his appearance and clothes, becoming an eccentric Jewelled and dyed in his fifties and than a butterfly. Always, however, there was an unerring touch to his eccentricity, which was unpredictable and ominously dangerous, funny and icy at the same time.

Though he remained mysteriously intact, his mischievous sense of fun and good nature intrigued all those with whom he came into contact.

His precociousness held real wit and a particularly sophisticated beauty somewhere between Huisman's hero Des Esseintes, Baron Corvo and the creatures of Ronald Fir-

bank. His designs of brilliant translucent colours reminded one of Edward Burra, Beardsley, and of his tutor, Nicholas Georgiadis.

Spurling had a talent for designing costumes on paper which translated well into reality. He was a rare gift of which Kenneth MacMillan's acute visual awareness took full advantage, identifying a particular dance with certain music as only geniuses can and Kenneth certainly did.

Spurling emanated a genuine gaiety in all senses of the word whilst remaining deadly serious. The body of his work in theatre remains small but it had a real personal quality, being mainly supported by loyal choreographers. The other support came from the Royal Opera House where he worked as an assistant. His was a life of independence and sadness which, however, he never allowed himself to indulge. His sensibility was not only for the fantastic and strange, but for the other people whom he dressed and worked with in the Opera House. Though he could sting rarely unkindly, he was the

most vulnerable and unselfish of men and many relied on him for confidence, valuing his kindness, humanity and unexpected joviality.

Peter Snow
Mary Clarke asked Ian Spurling's first commission, a costume for the Royal Ballet's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, first shown by Western Theatre Ballet at the Edinburgh Festival that year and subsequently revived by the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden in 1973. It at once established him as a designer of audacity and brilliance, antagonising the purists but winning admirers who came to describe him as "the Bakst of the 1970s". He worked on two more ballets the following year for WTB. Peter Darrell's *Non Stop* and MacMillan's *Volcs Excentrique*, but by far his most popular and enduring commission was for MacMillan's Scott Joplin ballet, *Elite Syncopations*, first staged by the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden in 1974 and remaining in either or both of



Ian Spurling and his designs for La Finta Giocosa

the Royal companies until today. In 1979 he designed MacMillan's *La Finta Giocosa*, a nostalgic evocation of the fashion plate world of the 1830s which was to disappear for ever with the advent of the second world war. For Jonathan Burrows and the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet in Birmingham, he designed *The Winter Play* which dealt with folk rituals. His last work for ballet was the enchanting *Sir Peter and the Wolf*, which the young Matthew Hart choreographed (as a tribute to Sir Peter Wright) for the Royal Ballet School in the summer of 1995 and which was subsequently shown at the Royal Opera House. (A sadly unfulfilled commission was to design Hart's next ballet to be staged by English



National Ballet in May.) Besides his ballet work, Spurling designed two children's operas for Peter Maxwell Davies, *The Two Fiddlers* and *Cinderella*. He also designed costumes for Freddie Mercury.

Ian Spurling, ballet designer, born June 10, 1926; died April 7, 1996

Letters

Neil Kinnock writes: Gordon Clough (*Obituary, April 8*) had the warmth and the wit as well as the appearance — of a hyper-intelligent elf. Every encounter with him was enjoyable, even when he was being testing as an interviewer. His award-winning documentaries, like his Round Britain Quiz questions and chairmanship, were masterpieces of work. He was a model of balance and integrity — I only knew of his active support for the Labour Party because of the social occasions which he attended. He was, however, recording an interview with me on the morning after the 1983 General Election when news of Michael Foot's retirement as Leader came in. When the recording was finished he simply said "I'll support you to become party leader despite the fact that I like you" — and then made that marvellous rasping guffaw. Gordon was an unsurpassed professional and will be missed.

Elvis Cuhiti writes: Odysseus Elytis (*Obituary, March 19*) was celebrated in Britain in 1990 by a new translation by Peter Levy of his *Song of Herakleitos Mourning For The Lacedaemon Lost In Albania*, on the 50th anniversary of the Albanian Front, when the Greeks de-

Death Notices

GARDNER, Florence (Mrs), 91, died peacefully following a brief illness on April 11, 1996 in her 91st year. Her husband, John, died in 1981. She is survived by her son, David, and daughter, Claire. Burial at St. Andrew's Church, Brixton. Donations to St. Andrew's Church, Brixton, or to the Florence Gardner Trust, c/o The Trustees, 10, Lambard St, London, EC3P 3AH.

SAVAGE, Kenneth Andrew (Mrs), of Bournemouth, Dorset, aged 80, tragically died in a motor accident in France on 1 April 1996. Beloved younger son of Margaret and Malcolm, who together with Joan and Jane and good friend to so many. Please share your condolences to the family. For details of the funeral service, contact the funeral director, Mr. G. J. Smith, 10, Lambard St, London, EC3P 3AH.

In Memoriam

In Memory of Dan Abel, born June 19th 1910 and died April 13th 1996. As I look into my eyes I feel he's looking back at me. In respect, we are forever close. With love from his family and friends. Mike and Rosemary.

For more information please telephone 0171 713 4567. Fax 0171 713 4159

Weekend Birthdays

JULIE Christie, who is 56 tomorrow, taught us how to swing in the sixties. We'd watch *Billy Liar*, and ogle at this greasy-haired bundle of hope who could have skipped to London if the trains hadn't been running. But the critics weren't impressed with the Indian-born actress. David Thomson, in his *Biographical Dictionary of Film*, wrote: "She lacked exactly the qualities of grace, spontaneity and humour that the part

required." Maybe, but her lack of grace was her charm. For someone who "can't act" she has been in some great films, notably *McCabe and Mrs Miller* and *Don't Look Now*, a movie as haunting as it is erotic. Significantly, both directors tapped her humanity rather than abstracting her as an icon. When it became a cliché that Christie was the most beautiful woman in the world, she withdrew from glamour and, to a great extent, from

film. When she returned to the stage last year in Pinter's *Old Times* it was a shock. Pinter had reduced her to an icon. If he'd asked us we'd have told him not to waste our Julie. **SJS**

Today's birthdays: Alan Clark, historian and former Conservative minister, 68; Liam Cosgrave, former leader of Fine Gael, 76; Edward Fox, actor, 58; Seamus Heaney, poet, 57; Garry Ke-

sparov, chess champion, 38; Howard Keel, singer and actor, 76; Dame Margaret Price, opera singer, 56; Jonjo O'Neill, racehorse trainer, 44; Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza, industrialist, 76; Barbara Welby, novelist, 87.

Tomorrow's other birthdays: Dr Brian Borlase, zoologist, former director-general of Wildlife and Wetlands Trust, 33; Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Dalton, former deputy Su-

preme Allied Commander, Atlantic, 65; Susan Davies, photographer, 68; Sir John Gielgud, actor, 92; Valerie Hobson, former actress, 73; The Rt Rev Dr David Hope, Archbishop of York, 52; Julian Lloyd Webber, cellist, 45; Loretta Lynn, country singer, 61; Caroline Marland, managing director of the Guardian and Observer, 50; Rod Steiger, actor, 71; Elizabeth Symons, general secretary, First Division Association, 45.

Face to Faith

The right to a living

Charles Handy

WORK isn't what it used to be. That has been obvious for a while now, nor will the world of work go back to what it once was: jobs for all, jobs that lasted for life. What interests me, however, is not the economic aspects of this new industrial revolution, but its personal and social impact.

Unemployment is soul-deadening, of course, but even smart new concepts like telecommuting can mean that we see no one else all day. Self-employment may be liberating, but it is also lonely. If Pascal was right that all the ills of the world stem from the fact that man cannot sit in a room alone, what is going to happen when more of us are condemned by economic forces to do just that? Where will we find meaning, or our identity?

An invitation from the BBC, therefore, to tour Britain talking to some of those whose working lives had changed, was irresistible. I met a newly-redundant managing director, a teleworker for BT, the coach of Wigan's Rugby League team, ex-miners and ex-mill workers, school-kids, teachers, doctors and glassworkers. All of them had had to find new roles and new ways of describing themselves.

The journey helped me to clarify what seem to be the three steps to identity.

Step one is survival — if you can manage to earn your living you feel that you have earned the right to be here. Survival, however, has to be earned to mean anything. State benefits may be our legitimate right, and necessary for physical survival in some cases, but they do little for our sense of self. There is no substitute, I came to realise, for real paid work.

Step two is a sense of responsibility, the feeling that we matter to someone else. "Mattering" or the sense that they were needed by others was what kept many people going through tough times. The one unmarried, long-term unemployed man in my sample was the only person who openly wondered whether there was any point in life. He could not find work, he felt dispirited and without identity, a statistic without a point. That was my saddest conversation.

Step three to a full identity comes from a feeling of contribution, from the sense that one has made a difference in some way, somewhere, and that the world will be marginally better from the fact that one has lived. It may be a new business created, a school reared or a job well done. It can be as small as a garden created where only weeds

once grew. As one person said, "I don't know what to do and where. People who would define success for me and give me their version of the white stone."

When my father-in-law checked into the hospital for his last illness he was asked to write down his religion on the admission form. He wrote "British Army" and for him,

that was the literal truth. The Army had given him his identity and most of his purpose in life. Today, for some, the corporation is as important to them as the Army was to him. It fills the place of religion and its work becomes a form of worship and the whole point of their being.

But it is religion misconceived, religion as a way to lose oneself, religion as escapism, in which responsibility for oneself is abdicated, apparently in the cause of something greater than oneself. That has to be worrying for both individuals and their institutions, for it can only mean that people become mere instruments of the institution; cyphers rather than persons with their own values

and their own identities. Perhaps we are fortunate, in the end, if the new world of work means the decline in importance of the large institutions, throwing us back on to ourselves and making us face up to our own beliefs and values.

Charles Handy's radio series, *Making Sense* is currently on Radio 4

Doonesbury



BY GARRY TRUDEAU

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MoneyGuardian

Lenders fear exchange rate spectre

Teresa Hunter

MORTGAGE lenders warned yesterday that any attempt to force the UK into a revamped European exchange rate mechanism would have dire consequences for the housing market.

Average house prices began to fall almost immediately Britain entered the Exchange Rate Mechanism in October 1990, going from a peak of \$66,811 at the end of that year to \$63,117 three months later. By the time we pulled out in September 1992 prices were heading down towards \$61,000, where they lingered for some time before gradually easing to the current average price of \$63,210.

Halifax general manager David Giechris said it would be wrong to blame the ERM exclusively for prices falling, but admits that it deepened the recession. He said: "We would certainly be very concerned at any prospect of returning to a regime which meant higher and more vola-

tile interest rates. Anything which would cause borrowers to worry about a return to double-digit interest rates would have a negative impact on any housing market recovery."

UBS analyst Rob Thomas went as far as to describe any link between European currencies and sterling as "a disaster" for homebuyers. He said: "The market is still struggling to survive the last dose of pain inflicted on it by the ERM."

Their warnings came as Chancellor Kenneth Clarke began talks with EU finance ministers in Verona at the end of a week which had seen a variety of good news for Britain's 10 million mortgage borrowers.

The Nationwide cut its mortgage rates to 6.74 per cent — the lowest for 30 years, reducing monthly repayments on a \$30,000 loan by \$20 to \$336.88 as against \$356.07 when mortgage rates peaked in 1990.

A quarterly house price survey from the Halifax revealed that values rose by 1.5 per cent over the past three months,

with prices in some regions particularly buoyant.

Houses in the South-east now cost 2.3 per cent more than at the end of last year and 1.3 per cent more than a year ago. Greater London saw prices rise by 2.8 per cent over the quarter. Similarly, house prices in the North grew by 2.8 per cent and in the South-west prices were up 1.5 per cent.

Two reports revealed a sharp drop in the numbers of people in negative equity, now below the one million mark for the first time since 1992. UBS estimates that rising prices have released 280,000 families from the blight. And Woolwich economist Martin Ellis said his report, due next week, would confirm these figures.

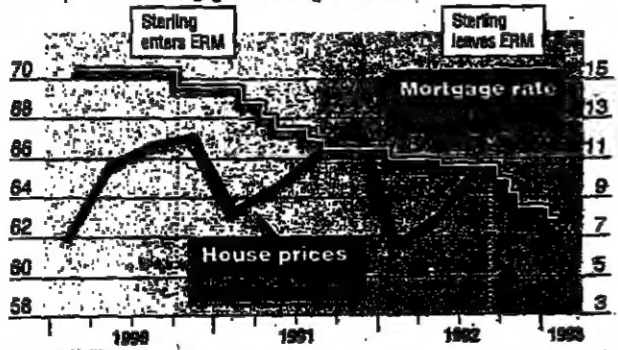
Lenders are eagerly awaiting April's mortgage transaction and house price figures for the final proof that the long-awaited recovery in the housing market has begun and can be sustained.

For the time being they prefer to remain sceptical, although, with mortgage repayments eating up just 11 per cent of a first-time buyers' earnings compared with 30 per cent in 1990, the signs are good.

Lenders are less concerned about the impact of a pending general election, believing a Labour victory at the polls would not have a negative impact on recovery, although the Woolwich's Martin Ellis warned borrowers not to expect significant house price rises, whoever wins. He said: "Low inflation means prices will not rise so high, and will fall again when the cycle turns down. Negative equity is here to stay."

The housing market

House prices and mortgage rate changes in the ERM



Source: Halifax

MoneyGuardian was edited this week by Teresa Hunter



Seven year itch... Brian and Jacqueline Kitching are going to the ombudsman after insurers Legal & General withdrew underpinning commitment. PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD RAYNER

Cracks begin to appear as house market eases

Ian Wylie

THE Insurance Ombudsman has thrown a lifeline to some desperate homeowners by promising the speedier handling of disputes over subsidence claims. But while the move could help free up the market, any increase in property sales is likely to reveal the full scale of the subsidence problem.

And insurers are already warning that thousands of homeowners face another summer of subsidence because the low rainfall this winter has failed to replace moisture in clay soil.

Wrangles over subsidence can stretch on for years, blighting any prospect of moving for sufferers.

After seven years waiting for their insurer to proceed with underpinning, Jacqueline and Brian Kitching have decided to go to the Insurance Ombudsman. The couple bought their house in Stockton-on-Tees in 1971, but only became aware that it was affected by subsidence in 1977 when their lender, the Abbey National, refused an advance on their mortgage.

In 1989, when large cracks began to appear in the hall and living room, they made a claim against their Legal & General buildings insurance policy. L&G's loss adjuster agreed that underpinning was necessary, but when the surveyor estimated the cost of underpinning work at \$80,000, the insurer appointed new surveyors and retreated from its original commitment to underpinning.

In the seven years since the Kitchings made their claim, the insurance company has spent just \$9,000 on replacing drains, rain-proofing one of the bedrooms and felling some mature trees. Mr Kitching is a retired schoolteacher and Mrs Kitching plans to retire

in June, but the couple fear that without a saleable house they will have no capital to fund their retirement.

The full scale of the problem will only emerge when homeowners planning to sell call in the surveyors for property valuations as the market revives. In anticipation of rising costs, many insurers are raising premiums while others, such as AA Insurance, now offer policies which exclude subsidence cover.

The average subsidence claim takes at least two years to process but, at a conference this week organised by the Subsidence Claims Association, homeowners swapped tales of insurance companies which have delayed settlements by several years.

The conference urged desperate homeowners to approach the Insurance Ombudsman, Dorothy Rickman, principal assistant to the ombudsman, said the office has cleared its backlog and advised policyholders to approach the ombudsman now before the anticipated surge in complaints in two or three years time.

After a subsidence claim peaked in 1991 at 2550 million, the ombudsman's office was flooded with complaints and policyholders were forced to wait up to four months. Now Mrs Rickman says ombudsman staff begin working on subsidence complaints within a week or two of receiving all the documents.

Before policyholders can approach the ombudsman, they need a letter from their insurance company agreeing that an impasse has been reached and that the insurer's own complaints procedures have been exhausted. Mrs Rickman said some insurers have a change of heart when they realise the policyholder is serious about contacting the ombudsman.

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Railtrack regulator offers unprecedented guarantees • Ministers seek to placate wary City investors

Watchdog offers easy ride

Simon Beavis
Lisa Buckingham
and Rebecca Smithers

JOHNSON Swift, the rail watchdog, is understood to be offering an unprecedented guarantee to Railtrack investors that there will be no nasty regulatory surprises once the industry joins the private sector.

The Government has put pressure on Mr Swift to assure big City investors that there will be no upsets, following last year's debacle over the sale of shares in National Power and PowerGen.

Then the electricity regulator, Stephen Littlechild, sparked an outcry from investors by announcing he was to rewrite price controls, causing the new shares to plunge below their issue price on the day they were floated.

This week the National Audit Office, publishing its report into the electricity sell-off, said that 91 per cent of big institutions were more reluctant to buy shares from the Government following the fiasco.

Although Railtrack advisers dismiss investors' statements as posturing — in part designed to talk down the share flotation price — they are rattled by the potential threat of a boycott, which would jeopardise not only the rail float but also the sale of nuclear power stations which follows hard on its heels.

So the regulator is expected to include in next Monday's pathfinder prospectus a number of controls governing Railtrack, which owns the national rail and signalling network and the country's 14 biggest stations.

Potential investors have been told that, unlike other watchdogs, he has been in post for two years and therefore intimately involved in drawing up the pricing structure. He has stressed that Railtrack needed to be put under a tough, inflation-linked deal to bring prices down if it was to be a credible private sector operation.

It is also being stressed that

Mr Swift is a lawyer with a commercial background, unlike Prof Littlechild, who is an academic.

The regulatory assurances are also designed to counteract the increasingly potent threat by Labour to bring Railtrack under much stricter control if it is elected.

The assurances follow the director of rail franchising, Roger Salmon, who is thought privately to regard the Railtrack flotation as creating a potentially dangerous monopoly.

Although the Government knew as long ago as December that Mr Salmon wished to stand down, the announcement of his departure just five days before the pathfinder prospectus is published is expected to heighten City fears about the sell-off.

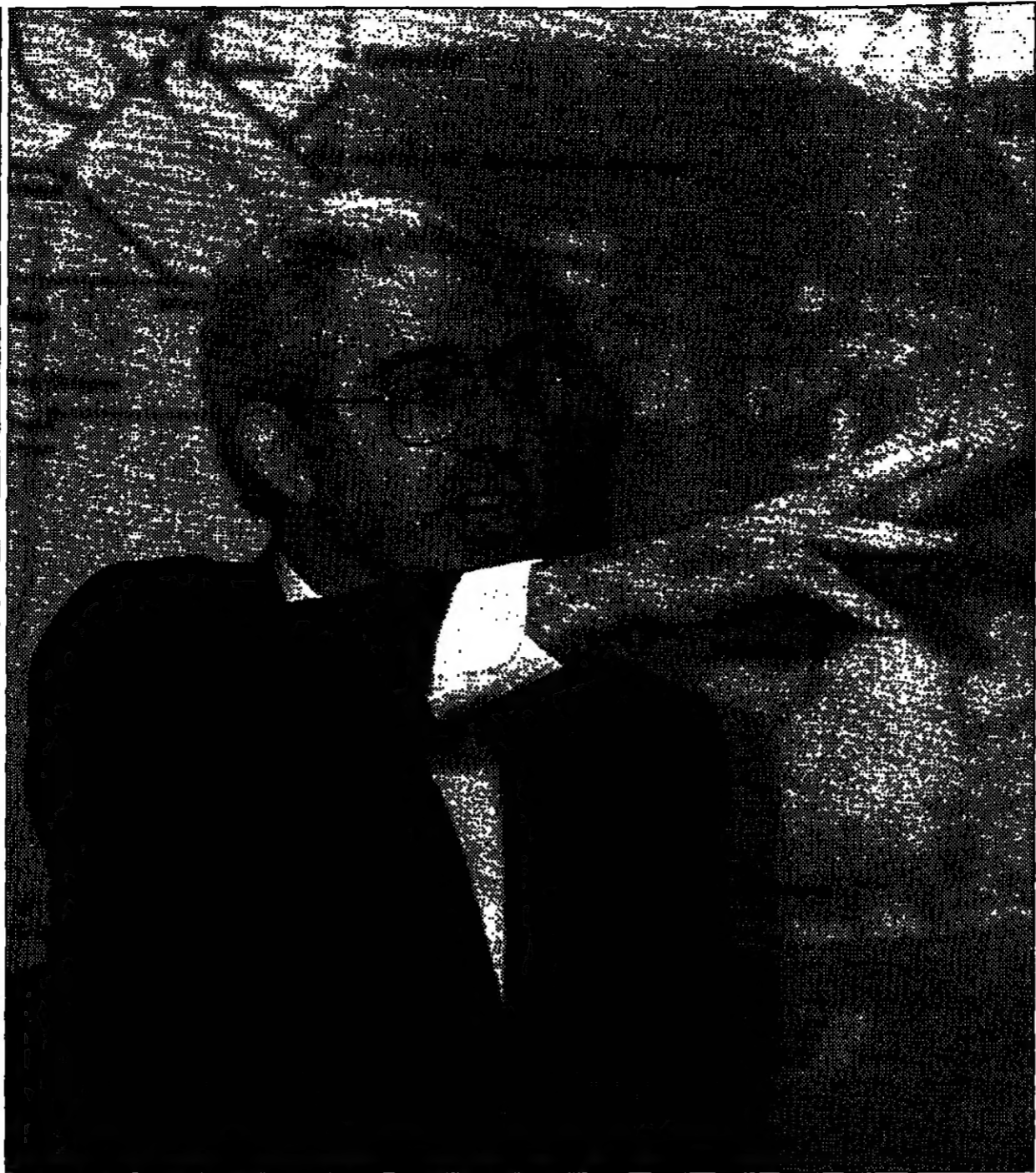
Labour is hoping to capitalise on these concerns by attacking the pathfinder prospectus next Wednesday on the sale and Mr Salmon's resignation. It will be the first big test of the Conservatives' precarious one-seat majority.

The Government is aware that any problem with the Railtrack sell-off in May could derail its plans to privatise British Energy, the nuclear power company, a month later.

To pre-empt any public furor over the sale, it has insisted that Railtrack's directors, led by Robert Horton, should not receive any share options and must wait at least four years before receiving any substantial performance bonus.

Ministers will try to present the pay structure as complying strictly with the Cadbury and Greenbury codes of corporate ethics.

Although Mr Horton, who was forced out of British Petroleum, is regarded as highly paid as part-time chairman of Railtrack, ministers have insisted that his pay will not rise sharply after the privatisation.



Now departing... Roger Salmon, at yesterday's Network South Central press conference. His resignation — allegedly after privately expressing disquiet about rail sale — is expected to heighten institutional anxieties. PHOTOGRAPH BY MAX MURPHY

Saturday Notebook

Old Lady wins by playing leap-frog



Edited by
Alex Brummer

THE Bank of England may have suffered stings and arrows for its lapses in the supervision of Barings, but to its credit it seems willing to learn from its mistakes.

In the process, deputy governor Howard Davies, who is taking a special interest in regulatory matters, and Michael Foot, the new director of supervision, appear to be reasserting their rights as the City's lead regulator. The Bank seems to have taken on pre-emptive powers over activities not normally within its purview, which will probably be a cause of consternation at the Securities and Investments Board, not to mention the Securities and Futures Authority.

However, because the SIB, it seems, has played no role in cleaning up the post-Barings mess, and the SFA under its new chairman, Nick Durbin, has shown a notable lack of openness and decisiveness in bringing discipline to those within its sights, they do not have much cause to complain about a more aggressive Bank of England.

There is no point in regulators sitting around worrying about turf wars when they should be spending their time preventing the next financial failure.

Under the new regime, which takes effect from Monday, the Bank of England will take upon itself the authority to commission special accountants' reports not just into the main banking operations of financial organisations but other activities, too. This means, for instance, that the Old Lady will have the power to send its accountants into the securities and derivatives arms of City organisations rather than leaving this to the SFA and others.

In effect, the Bank is leapingfrogging the difficulties which have arisen at international level, between banking and securities regulators, and, on the recommendations of the Board of Banking Supervision, is taking unto itself new powers.

Under these arrangements the Bank will not wait until its routine audit of a financial group's affairs but will be able to act when there is a significant change in the business, such as when Barings became more of a securities house than a bank — or when there is warning of weakness such as that received by the Bank from the Bank for International Settlements in Basle not long before the Barings implosion.

No doubt there will be some complaints about all this being too late. Nevertheless, the Bank deserves some credit for recognising the problems, in its own procedures and moving with due speed to correct them.

Crossed lines

DEUTSCHE Telekom's rather delphic declaration of interest, over a Frankfurt supper table, in events at Cable & Wireless leaves unclear whether it is interested in the whole company, just Mercury Communications in the UK, or much

beyond the premise "wouldn't it be nice if..."

Nonetheless, the ensuing calculations about how the state-owned German company would involve itself in the latest round of consolidation within the telecommunications industry serves to underline that Mercury remains the key to any change of ownership at C&W.

BT, as the only openly declared suitor for C&W, would prefer to have Mercury's future ownership determined before it locks itself into the terms of a merger. Even if a BT/C&W deal could be agreed in principle, it would be fiendishly difficult to negotiate in detail.

A big headache is C&W's controlling stake in Hong Kong Telecom. Any offer for the former makes a bid for the outstanding shares in the latter mandatory, hence the idea of C&W bidding for BT.

Whatever happens on that front, BT knows it will not be allowed to keep Mercury, so getting that question out of the way in advance would make life a little easier.

Of course, BT and C&W could link up without settling Mercury's future. The regulatory authorities might be persuaded to nod through a deal, provided it included a promise to sell Mercury within a specified time. The snag is that if time threatened to run out, BT/C&W could be faced with disposing of Mercury at a fire-sale price, just to meet the terms of the bid approval.

Perhaps Deutsche Telekom will ask C&W to wait until its own privatisation is clear. Then it could offer itself to the British company as a trade sale!

Electric shock

DIRECTORS of National Power and PowerGen have every excuse for sore heads this morning after reading accounts of what the Monopolies Commission has recommended on their bids for two regional electricity companies. The pain is the sort you get from celebration, not the proverbial blizz instrument.

The MMC panel — five experts including a trade unionist and an academic — has taken a soft line. Although the generators expected to get their bid proposals through the three-month inquiry, they never dreamt they would do so on the basis of three flimsy conditions.

The MMC appears to have bought the line that these privatised power monopolists should be left to breeze through the free market unfettered. That line would be sustainable were it not for the fact that the MMC is clearly in two minds.

It recognises that a vertical integration allowing the groups that run the power stations to take over the firms that supply and distribute power to households might operate against the public interest. But it then argues that, because it cannot prove this, it will let National Power take over Southern Electric and PowerGen swallow up Midlands Electricity.

This is a bizarre statement from a body whose chief role is to guard the public interest. Surely, if there is any doubt, the commissioners ought to presume that interest will be harmed and only allow the bid to proceed under the protection of strict and rigorous controls.

Perhaps when the full report is published the MMC will look more defensive. For now, it appears to be naive in the extreme.

Bank of England widens powers

Sarah Whitebloom

THE Bank of England yesterday announced a significant increase in its powers to investigate the activities of financial institutions, in an effort to prevent a repeat of the Barings scandal.

For the first time, the Bank will be able to look at their non-banking operations. From Monday, it will be able to commission a financial group's accountants to produce reports on any of the group's businesses — including broking, derivatives trading or foreign exchange dealing.

According to the Bank, it will be able to call for information on any business which may have a material impact on a bank.

It will also be able to demand reports on a firm's overseas operations.

The crisis which led to the collapse of Barings last year started in its Singapore-based derivatives operation.

Although the Bank was Barings' chief regulator, it had no direct control over the office which led to the institution's collapse.

The Bank maintained yesterday that its new powers would not bring it into conflict with other regulators, such as the Securities and Futures Authority, which currently oversees non-banking operations.

A Bank spokesman emphasised that regulators worked closely together to ensure there was no duplication or overlap.

But the move significantly widens the Bank's sphere of influence over the financial world. It reinforces the appearance of the Bank as the leading City regulator over and above the Financial Services Act watchdogs, led by the Securities and Investments Board.

In a further effort to prevent a second Barings-style scandal, the Bank will also be able to demand comprehensive reports on an ad hoc basis, when there has been a "significant change" in a bank's business or where a weakness has been identified.

Exchange launches inquiry into leaked MMC electricity report

Generators' share prices rise sharply as Labour claims Government competition policy undermined by lack of integrity. CHRIS BARRIE and SIMON BEAVIS report

THE STOCK Exchange launched an inquiry yesterday into the leak of a highly confidential report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission recommending that bids for two regional electricity companies (Recs) by power generators be cleared by the Government.

The report, the latest embarrassing leak involving price-sensitive information in the power sector, is said to have been leaked by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Secretary Ian Lang, via trade bids by National Power and PowerGen for Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity respectively.

The leak in the Economist sparked Labour protests that

the Government's competition policy had been undermined.

Shadow energy minister John Birtle said the leak threw "into question the integrity of the relationship between the secretary of state and the MMC". He said it was "an incredibly dangerous precedent" for electricity shares to change hands on the basis of price-sensitive information which had yet to be considered by the secretary of state.

The National Consumer Council director, Ruth Evans, warned the takeovers could lead to higher bills for customers.

However, Yvonne Constantine of the Electricity Consumers Committee said consumers could be safeguarded provided Recs were made to purchase power competitively by law.

The Exchange's inquiry is understood to centre on rises in share prices on Thursday and Friday. Market sources suggested that market makers were confident on Thursday before the Economist published a detailed account of the MMC's conclusions — that the takeovers would be cleared. The Exchange is understood to have contacted "relevant parties" to flush out the source of the leak.

The Exchange refused to comment on the leak, but said an inquiry was a matter for the Exchange.

The MMC is said to have recommended that the bids, worth \$4.75 billion together, be cleared on three conditions.

First, that the companies be forced to sell off within 18 months the generating capacity owned by Southern and Midlands once the Recs had been bought.

Second, that the companies ring-fence price sensitive information such as details about contracts signed by the Recs with other power generators.

Third, that industry regulator professor Stephen Littlechild be awarded extra powers to monitor and enforce operating agreements.

Industry sources suggested that this was a reference to extra safeguards for consumers by ensuring that generating companies and Recs sold and bought power at competitive prices despite their ownership.

The MMC delivered its report to Mr Lang at the end of March. He will consider its

findings when he returns from a trade mission to Japan next week. The trade and industry department refused to comment on the leak, but said an inquiry was a matter for the Exchange.

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Lloyd's to raise Names package

Pauline Springett

LLOYD'S of London is to increase its proposed settlement offer to loss-stricken Names from £2.8 billion to more than \$3 billion, sources close to the insurance market disclosed yesterday.

The extra cash would be used mainly to help up to 15,000 Names who have met their losses so far, but are being asked to stump up even more. Many of these Names have threatened to reject the offer — due to be finalised in May — believing they are being treated unfairly.

The market, which has recently lost \$11 billion, could collapse if the offer is rejected.

The new-look rescue deal is still likely to attract stiff opposition from Names. It is understood that the new money is likely to benefit only those fully paid-up Names who are facing the highest bills.

It is also believed that the lion's share of the new money may be given to Names who are litigating over their losses. That may infuriate Names who refrained from suing.

This is the first time Lloyd's has indicated that the \$3.8 billion offer will definitely be improved.

Until now it has maintained that despite strenuous efforts to persuade agents, brokers and auditors to top up the compensation, nothing could be promised.

Negotiations are continuing, and the final contributions from each party have yet to be agreed. It is understood Lloyd's may have secured an extra \$200 million.

Lloyd's is also poised to announce that it will cost Names much less than they had originally thought to re-insure their old year liabilities through Equitas. This is the company being set up to manage claims from 1992 and earlier.

Originally, Lloyd's estimated Equitas would cost the Names £1.9 billion, but the initial indications from the Department of Trade and Industry have shown the cost will be closer to \$1.5 billion. This "extra" \$400 million will also ease pressure on the Names.

Newspaper Publishing asks for £23m to cover Independent loss

Lisa Buckingham

NEWSPAPER Publishing, which owns the Independent and Independent on Sunday, is raising another £23 million from its main shareholders to help cover past losses and an expected £6 million deficit this year.

Most of the money will come from the group's main investors, Mirror Group Newspapers and Tony O'Reilly's Irish Independent group, which each holds a 43 per cent stake.

Those holdings are likely to rise to almost 46.5 per cent as a result of the rights issue, which puts a price of just 31p on each share.

In their heyday, Independent shares sold for at least £5 each in an internal market.

It is understood that

Spanish publisher, Promotora de Informaciones (Prisa), one of Newspaper Publishing's founder investors, will not participate in the fund-raising and will see its stake cut to 6.73 per cent.

This is the second refinancing of Newspaper Publishing in less than a year. But chairman, Liam Neill, said the company had significantly reduced its losses through rationalisation and increased revenues.

Like other newspaper groups, Newspaper Publishing is still suffering from the high cost of newsprint.

Newspaper Publishing reported losses of about £19.5 million last year — £51 million in the 15 months to the end of 1994 — and is known to want to increase the cover price of its daily newspaper as soon as competitively possible.

Three directors share £1m for mere 12 months' work

Sarah Whitebloom and Lisa Buckingham

THREE former directors of National Express will share compensation of nearly £1 million after spending a total of 12 months on the board, the coach company's annual report revealed yesterday.

The three — Don Colston, Joe Duffy and Brian Kerslake — joined the board in May last year after West Midlands Travel, the bus company they ran, was taken over by National Express, netting them a huge shares windfall.

Mr Colston resigned from the board in August but remains an employee of WMT until the end of this month when he will receive £294,069 in "retirement compensation". This is on top of remuneration of £137,106 paid in respect of the period after his resignation in 1995.

Mr Duffy resigned in November and is set to collect a total of £429,561 in compensation. He received £19,960 from the time of his resignation to the end of 1995.

Mr Kerslake resigned in August and received £232,000.

Meanwhile, Cadbury Schweppes, the sweets and fizzy drinks empire which spawned corporate governance guru Sir Adrian Cadbury, reported yesterday that its chairman, Dominic Cadbury, was given a 26 per cent rise in remuneration to £695,000. In addition Mr Cadbury was given a £254,000 pension payment.

The company's highest-paid director, chief executive David Wellings, earned £876,000, only fractionally more than last year, and received a pension contribution of £256,000.

It also emerged that, contrary to recommendations contained in the Cadbury and Greenbury codes, many of the company's directors, including Mr Cadbury, enjoy three-year rolling service contracts.

The company said three-year contracts were necessary to recruit executives of "appropriate calibre". Cadbury has made a concession to the latest thinking on large pay-offs by saying that, following changes made in 1993, its directors are entitled to only three years of their basic pay rather than total remuneration.

Ford now in driving seat at Mazda

Kevin Rafferty

FORD Motor Company announced yesterday it is taking effective control of Japan's sixth-largest carmaker by increasing its stake to 33.4 per cent.

Mazda has traded its Japanese nationality for survival, one Japanese newspaper said.

Henry Wallace, a Scot sent by Ford to Hiroshima in 1994 as executive vice-president, will become president of Mazda from June.

It will be the first time a foreigner has become chief executive of a leading Japanese company and represents a stunning reversal of fortunes in an industry where only a few years ago the Japanese ruled the international roost and the Americans were regarded as allies.

Ford has been working with Mazda since 1989 and was the biggest shareholder, with a 24.5 per cent stake before the announcement. Mazda made the mistake, however, of investing heavily in luxury cars just as Japan's economic bubble burst.

NI jobs initiative is 'all show, but no real action'

ATTEMPTS to accelerate economic development in Northern Ireland could collapse, Howard Hastings, chairman in the Province of the Institute of Directors, said last night.

The Northern Ireland Growth Challenge, a government-driven private sector initiative to create 60,000 jobs by the turn of the century, was, he said, strong on presentation but lacking real action.

Mr Hastings told an IOD banquet in Belfast: "If this initiative represents a call to industry to address specific growth targets, it has failed to articulate these challenges to the business community as a whole. They may have laid out their stall, but they have not yet closed the sale."

Hong Kong governor Chris Patten was among an audience of 380 business leaders which also heard Mr Hastings, whose family runs Ulster's largest hotel chain, claim the Civil Service was increasingly politicised and too often preoccupied with policy presentation and short-term results.

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State-owned firm ponders ambitious move into race for telecoms rival Germans eyeing up C&W

Nicholas Bamister
Technology Editor

DEUTSCHE Telekom's chief financial officer, Joachim Kroeske, has surprised the German state-owned telecommunications monopoly by starting unofficial inquiries about making a takeover bid for Cable & Wireless.

Such a move would pit Deutsche Telekom against British Telecom, which is already a long way down the route to a £35 billion merger agreement with C&W.

Mr Kroeske told reporters at a dinner in Frankfurt on Thursday that Deutsche Telekom considered Britain a key market in its plans to broaden its presence in Europe. When asked about a takeover of

C&W, he said: "We are involved in sensitive pre-exploratory talks. But there have been no official discussions."

He added: "There is hardly a company that we aren't talking with. We need more time to figure out which constellation is possible and can be financed."

However, City analysts said that Deutsche Telekom was unlikely to make a full bid for C&W, though they accepted it was a strong contender to buy C&W's 80 per cent stake in Mercury Communications, the British telephone business, which would have to be sold if C&W and BT merged.

They pointed out that the uncertainty created by a full bid for C&W, which has a current market value of £15 billion, would force the German government to position the long-planned privatisation of Deutsche Telekom.

due later this year. One analyst said: "Deutsche Telekom doesn't appear to be in a position to take on C&W, because it is heavily borrowed and it has enough obligations in its own market."

The group has borrowings of about 100 billion marks (64 billion). In addition the group, because it is still state-owned and without quoted shares, would be unable to make a reverse takeover bid for C&W.

This is the mechanism BT is planning, to avoid a further bid for the £6 billion minority stake in Hongkong Telecom, the 57.5 per cent-owned jewel in C&W's crown.

The most logical move would be for Global 1, the joint venture between Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom, to buy Mercury, to give it access to the big UK multinational market. The French state-

owned group appeared to rule out such a deal last week.

Jo Oliver, an analyst at NatWest Markets, said Mr Kroeske's comments would strengthen C&W's position in its talks with BT. The possible emergence of a rival, however improbable, would force BT to weight the offer terms slightly more in C&W's favour. The shift in balance was reflected in share prices yesterday, with C&W rising 9p to 388p and BT slipping 1.5p to 368.5p.

Most major telecom groups are running the slide rule over C&W's Mercury stake, which is thought to be worth about £1.5 billion. A spokesman for BCE, the big Canadian company which owns 20 per cent of Mercury, said earlier this week: "We are monitoring the situation closely and have no further comment."

BCE bought its Mercury stake for \$480 million at the

top of the market in November 1992.

British cable TV operators have discussed forming a consortium to bid for Mercury. They have had a long relationship with the company, which carries many of their long-distance calls over its network.

If Mercury is put up for sale, however, the timing could not be worse for the big mainland European telecom monopolies, which are facing their biggest shake-up — the opening of their markets to competition. The main European Union countries are to open up their telecom markets fully by January 1, 1998.

Analysts, however, believe that BT would not have allowed its bankers to restart merger talks with C&W unless it was confident that a buyer acceptable to the British regulatory authorities could be found for Mercury.

Red carpets and a blue Citroën bring Eastern promise

Chirac strikes big deals with Li Peng — no awkward human rights questions asked.
ALEX DUVAL SMITH reports from Paris

FRANCE reaped trade deals worth more than £1 billion from the controversial red carpet treatment President Jacques Chirac gave China's prime minister earlier this week. As Li Peng leaves France today after four days of diplomatic incidents and protests about China's human rights record, British leaders look set to benefit also from the payback for President Chirac's hospitality.

Among trade contracts worth more than £1 billion (£1.5 billion) that have been agreed during Mr Li's visit is a preliminary aircraft-building agreement involving British Aerospace.

In return for hardly mentioning human rights and giving Mr Li an aureole of diplomacy, France has sold 90 Airbus passenger aircraft and confirmed an earlier order for a further three.

It has also secured the expansion of a Citroën factory in Chengde, a subsidiary of Gaz de France, will install domestic gas supplies in a part

of Shanghai and Franatome will supply tunnelling equipment for the city's new underground train system.

But the aircraft-building deal is potentially by far the most lucrative, since it centres on the development of a new 100-seater by North Korea and China, in cooperation with Aerospaciale, British Aerospace and the Italian Alenia.

Observers said, however, that Chinese pledges on joint ventures should be viewed with caution, adding that Beijing will not confirm until June whether it intends to cooperate with the European consortium or Boeing, which is already well established in China.

A French diplomat said: "China exercises 'jet diplomacy' with great finesse. It basically involves signing several documents pledging an intention to buy and considerably fewer actual purchase agreements. Then the real negotiating begins. Did we succeed? It is hard to say. It was matched by several French business leaders, one of whom said privately that President

Chirac had been "taken for a ride".

Others expressed disappointment that the Elysée Palace had promised much more than the Chinese delegation actually delivered.

GEC Alsthom had been hoping to confirm an order for 28 locomotives but did not even secure a "declaration of intent".

Electricité de France failed in its bid for a role in a new thermal power station.

Mr Li's visit was overshadowed by loud protests over China's human rights record, not least because a large number of political refugees came to France after the Tiananmen Square student uprising.

President Chirac's desire to thaw relations with China — no least because he himself is a lover of Oriental art — met with several obstacles over Mr Li's four days in France.

The prime minister's visit today to the Airbus factory in Toulouse is his only surviving walkabout in a schedule which has changed day by day.

The lowest point came on Wednesday evening when Mr Li, aware that the French prime minister, Alain Juppé, had succumbed to pressure to mention human rights in a pre-dinner speech, turned up an hour and a half late.

Unholy adland gets the papal blessing

John Glover in Milan

DOES the Pope sell? The world is about to find out, for the pontiff has agreed to give — for the first time — a product testimonial.

John Paul II has already hit Italian, German and Spanish television screens, and will be going global as the year progresses. Next week, the poster part of the campaign gets under way.

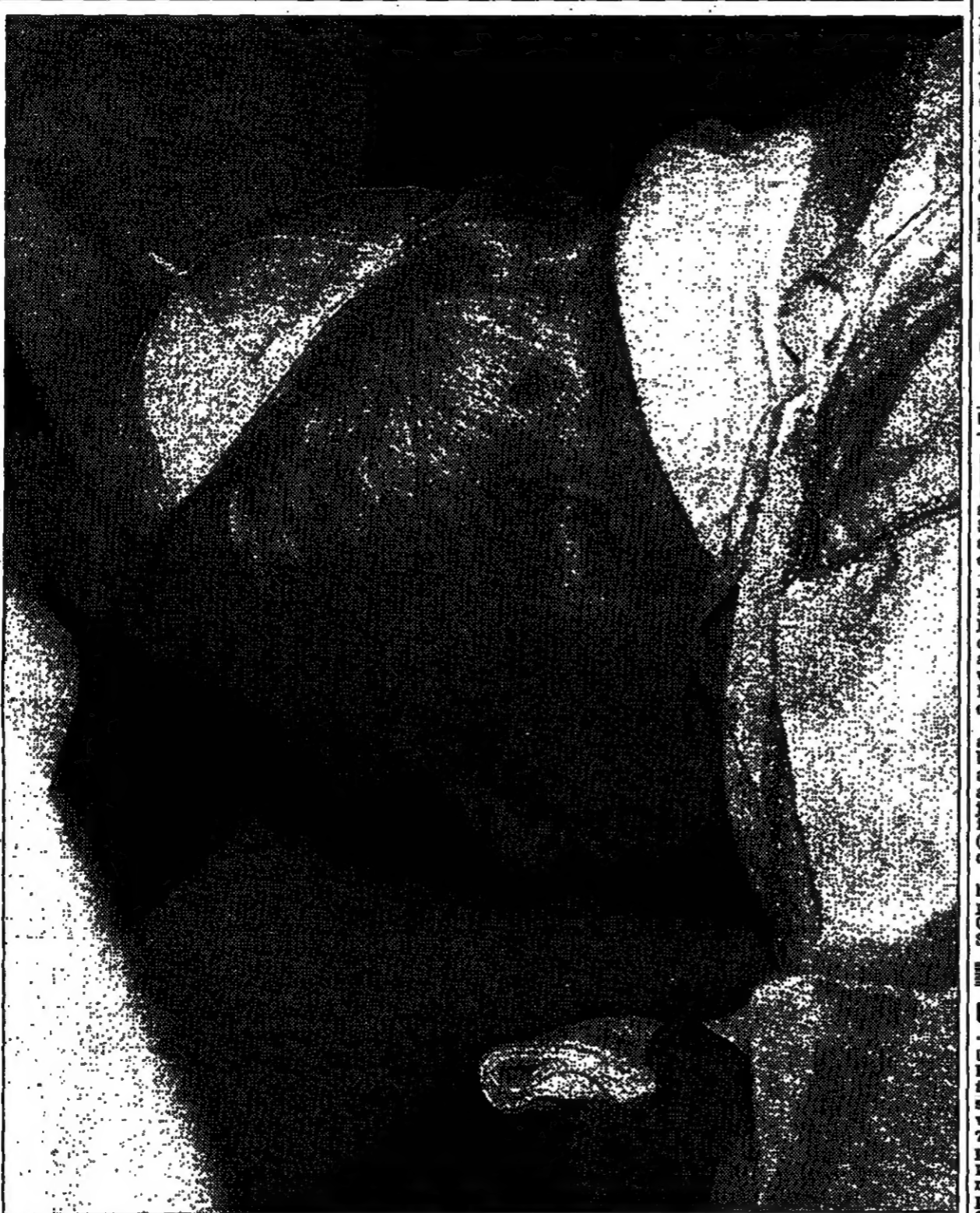
St Peter's successor, the world's most sought-after product-plugger, has been brought in to sell a double-CD featuring his recital of the full rosary as well as some of his reflections and a selection of Gregorian chants interpreted by the choir of Radio Vatican.

The CD campaign, which uses library film of the Pope, has been dreamed up by ad agency Leo Burnett, making use of some most unspiritual — but well-proven — techniques, including direct response (anyone interested phones a number and orders the product).

The slogans, "Enter each home to enter each heart," and "Your home is my Church," have a certain professional polish, in Italian at least, and the media have been carefully chosen.

The TV ad was shown on nationwide RAI TV, well away from the scantily clothed dancing girls that are staple fare on Italian television, just before the Pope was televised live from St Peter's Square celebrating the Easter mass.

Not all of the Pope's contacts with the world of commerce have been entirely happy — as with the visit he made to Calp, a crystal maker near Siena, in honour of St Joseph, patron saint of workers. After he made a speech extolling the virtues of social solidarity and criticising the unrestrained application of the profit motive, the company presented him with some



In all humility... The Pope bows to kiss the foot of one of 12 elderly men whose feet he washed during a traditional commerce-free ceremony in St John Lateran's Basilica, Rome

glassware for his private apartments.

Following the visit, Calp ran newspaper ads boasting, "His Holiness chose Calp to bless the world of work," and showing the wares presented to him.

The company's share price rose. Competitors

complained about unfair competition, employers' organisations wondered what was wrong with the profit motive, and the Vatican had to issue a clarification.

In the latest campaign, because — unlike the issuers of most run-of-the-

mill testimonials — the Pope has a job until he dies and so has no pension problems to worry about, the Holy Father received nothing.

The campaign was created free by Leo Burnett and the money raised by the CD sales will go partly to help

Vatican Radio improve its transmitters and partly to fund parishes.

According to Franco Giuliano, who was in charge of the campaign: "It was an efficient way of communicating it was no problem for us. Anyway, it was OK for the Vatican and they're Jesuits."

Milan's secretive bank elbowed from top spot

Robert Cox

If Italian finance had its own version of the rankings that determine which securities firms reign on Wall Street and in the City, observers would be in for an interesting change in 1992.

For the first time in memory, the secretive Milan investment bank Mediobanca, which celebrated its 50th anniversary on Wednesday, has given a run for its money in raising capital for Italian companies.

Istituto Mobiliare Italiano, a once sleepy government bank, slipped into the top slot among underwriters of Italian assets, primarily through its job as joint global co-ordinator in the £5 billion takeover of Eni (2.5 billion) initial stock offering in ENI.

"The banking world in Italy has now been divided into two players," said Jennifer Oliver-Martin, a Morgan Stanley banking analyst.

"There is Mediobanca and there is IML."

That's fine with IML, which is staking out territory on Piazza Affari, the heart of Milan's financial district, by allying with the country's leading commercial banks, Istituto Bancario San Paolo di Torino, Cariplo and Monte dei Paschi di Siena.

"We don't want to be the anti-Mediobanca," said Vittorio Serafino, vice-chairman in charge of IML's investment bank. "IML is trying to position itself into the financial Italy that will be in 10 years — where there are strong institutional investors to match strong corporations."

IML's plans are a tall order as Milan's financial markets are increasingly marginalised, with equity trading falling 20 per cent so far this year. In addition, Italy's brand of family capitalism is finding itself lost man out as Anglo-Saxon corporate governance takes over across Europe.

IML's struggle to scale the

buttresses of Mediobanca's half-century domain over Italian finance comes as more experienced bankers are trying to do the same — and succeeding. Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs, Schroder and others have won some of the biggest advisory mandates.

IML has every reason to succeed. There is backing from Italian corporations and the government, which sees domestic competition in the investment banking industry in the country's interest.

As well as underwriting the government's ENI asset sale, IML has clinched private transactions. It is global co-ordinator with Morgan Stanley in Mediast's 2,000 billion lire share issue in June. — Bloomberg.

Promise of cheaper drink leaves Finnish drunks ready to toast EU rules

Jon Henley in Helsinki

EVERY Saturday, shortly before 9pm, a strange ritual takes place on Finland's shopping streets. Normally reserved for the elderly, the 250 state-run liquor stores, the only ones in the country selling anything stronger than beer, are about to close — and hell has broken loose.

Last week, the rush was worse than usual. Facing falling sales and an end to its monopoly, the straight-forwardly named Alko is in trouble, and staff called a one-day strike in protest at planned job cuts.

"This is a preposterous situation," railed the country's largest daily, Helsingin Sanomat. "We can only hope this strike will hasten the day when drink at reasonable prices can be bought in neighbourhood grocery shops."

Alko's prices would make other Europeans blanch. A cheap wine costs £2, a basic Scotch £24. Alcohol duties generated 9 per cent of all state

revenue last year. Founded to protect Finns from themselves, Alko's task was, in the words of a 1980s Helsinki alcohol inspector, "the distribution of an entirely superfluous commodity."

It has grown into a major force, producing 60 million litres of alcoholic drink a year and exporting products such as Finlandia vodka to 80 countries. Sales are worth more than £725 million.

In fact, judged by per capita consumption, Finns are not excessive drinkers but, like

other Nordics, they go in for binge drinking, so they get drunk. "We have a special relationship with alcohol," said one health ministry official. "You can't change a nation."

But government policy — and with it Alko's fate — is in the balance following Finland's entry last year into the European Union.

Privately, government officials admit that the retail monopoly, officially sanctioned by the EU on health grounds until the end of 1996, cannot

last. Equally worrying for Alko are estimates that up to 20 per cent of the alcohol in Finland may have been imported from neighbouring Estonia and Russia, where vodka costs a fifth of the Finnish price.

"The economy's growing, people are drinking more, but our sales dropped 10 per cent last year and we've had to shed staff," said Alko managing director Reijo Salmi.

"The east of the country, particularly in areas with cheap drink. People are cross-

ing the Russian border with cartloads of beer 15 times a day."

Stung by the revenue loss, the government has proposed restricting duty-free imports from non-EU countries. Finns eye its attempts to postpone the inevitable with disbelief.

"Restriction constitutes a big reason for the warped drinking behaviour of our citizens," Helsinki-based dealer declared. "Surely today the price of drink can best be controlled by information, not more restrictions."



Update

□ The Norwegian Industry Federation said yesterday that an offshore labour strike scheduled for next week would shut down 70 per cent of Norway's oil production. The strike is planned to begin at midnight on Tuesday and is expected to involve 2,000 to 2,500 workers at platforms run by Statoil, Phillips Petroleum, Amoco Corp, BP and Elf Aquitaine.

□ The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has signed an agreement under which it is to take a 22 per cent stake in Zemes, the Latvian commercial bank.

□ The French industry minister, Francis Boretra, said on Wednesday that 1 billion francs (€130 million) would be set aside to help the country's 23,000 small and medium-sized firms secure growth by mastering key technologies between now and 1998. Half the money will be made available this year, allowing for equity-based support for innovative firms via the Caisse des Dépôts.

□ The supervisory board of German shipbuilder Bremer Vulkan has approved management board plans to break up the group, according to union sources. Germany's largest shipbuilder has been struggling for survival since falling protection from creditors in late February. The company needs a capital injection of more than 1 billion marks (€440 million) to stay afloat — a sum company sources concede it has little hope of raising.

□ Thursday's fire at Dusseldorf airport, which claimed 16 lives and injured more than 100 people, will cost insurers probably more than 100 million marks, chief executive of the leading insurer, Provinzial Feuer- und Lebensversicherung der Rheinprovinz, said.

Bob Geldof helps youth of Poland to go Atomic

SANCHIA BERG reports on the first post-communist music TV station

BOB Geldof has joined forces with Polygram and a Polish entrepreneur to create the first post-communist music television — Atomic TV.

A sign of how much has changed in Poland, Atomic TV has its office in what was once a bomb shelter for communist ministers, and is now Warsaw's most successful nightclub, the aptly named "Ground Zero".

Atomic TV starts on a small scale. From next Monday, Poland's 300,000 cable subscribers will be able to watch two hours of the new programmes every afternoon, repeated later in the day.

The producers plan to double their output soon, moving towards a 24-hour station.

As on MTV, young presenters will introduce music videos. There will be interviews with artists, and special features on fashion and style, all in Polish. Forty per cent of the music will be from Polish bands.

Making a brief visit to Warsaw for Atomic's inauguration, Mr Geldof said that he did not want the programmes to be seen as "MTV in Polish". He said: "We want Atomic to reflect back what's happening here — in music, in society."

Mr Geldof said his television company, Planet 24, had proved it could create a "brand" of television that people in Britain wanted to watch.

He was confident that Atomic could achieve a similar feat in Poland, the biggest market in central Europe, with the largest proportion of young people.

He said: "It should be like a club that everyone wants to belong to."

The music industry in Poland is small compared with that of western European countries. The International Federation for the Phonographic Industry estimated sales of around £100 million for the first six months of last year. But the Polish economy is said to be the fastest growing in Europe and, now an anti-piracy law has cut down bootleg copies of cassettes, the major international music publishers are moving in.

They are buying Polish musicians, promoting their artists, and signing up Polish musicians. Helmer Escher, head of Warner Music Poland, said he expected sales to increase by 10 to 15 per cent this year.

International companies such as PepsiCo are keen to reach the young audience of a music television channel.

Todd Stump, of Ground Zero, said that Atomic had already attracted enough advertising to break even.

He said the initial investment of £1 million would be recouped quickly.

Atomic, though, could soon face serious competition. America's Home Box Office is starting its own TV channel in Poland this summer. Slawomir Suss, managing director, said HBO was keen to start its own music channel, possibly by the end of the year.

He said it would be broadcast by satellite, reaching three times as many households as Atomic TV, and it would launch with at least 18 hours of programmes, rather than two.

As if preparing for battle, he said: "With a television channel there is a long road from launch to success — and the road is littered with failures."

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Finance Guardian

Flightless birds, bloodstock and chinchillas. All creatures great and small are used to gull the unwary. SARAH WHITEBLOOM and DAN ATKINSON uncover the natural history of investment scandals

There's one born every minute

OSTRICHES. Would you buy a flightless African bird and hope to make money? Someone, somewhere will. Around 2,000 people have spent an estimated \$44 million on more than 3,600 ostriches. In what appears to be one of the classic "investment opportunities" of our time.

To city professionals it sounded too good to be true. Having done their sums, financiers said it was inconceivable that the returns promised would be possible. Other ostrich farmers, who run legitimate operations, maintained that the only way OFC could give investors the promised returns was to raise cash by selling birds to more investors. "A classic case of pyramid selling," claimed one farmer.

The firm was open seven days a week to take the money. And, though the DTI inquiry began last November, it is understood that the number of investors has grown rapidly since then. In March alone the firm is believed to have taken \$5 million.

In many cases, swindlers ride on the coat tails of legitimate — if unorthodox — investment promotions. Fine wines, vintage cars, African art and "angel" investment in theatrical productions can all be respectable, albeit risky, punts for the strong-nerved speculator.

Five billion dollars-worth of these "ghost securities" float around the world, and victims have included the Salvation Army and the Chicago Housing Authority. With slight variations in the script, the scam remains the same. Victims are told that there is a semi-secret off-balance-sheet market in hugely valuable "prime bank" notes, sometimes called bank guarantees or standby letters of credit, and that these can be bought at a discount and sold for a huge profit. There is no such market and the documents are impressive-looking forgeries.

Last week, Nottinghamshire-based OFC was closed down by the Department of Trade and Industry after a secret investigation. The Official Receiver is trying to calculate how many individuals have lost out and how much money is owed to creditors. It is thought that many of those who invested in OFC's ostriches bought more than one bird and have exposures running into tens of thousands of pounds. Mature breeding ostriches come with a price tag of some \$14,000 each.

As if investors did not have enough to worry about, last week the Serious Fraud Office was called in by the DTI to investigate allegations about the company's operations.

For its part, OFC is fighting the winding-up order and a case is due to be heard in the High Court on May 8. The firm's press adverts painted a rosy picture of "a product that grows financially and naturally". What investors — OFC prefers "owners" — were offered for their initial outlay was an ostrich. It was the "meat of the millennium" and the firm also guaranteed to buy a set number of chicks a year — an ostrich produces around 40 annually — at £500 a head.

Recent scandals have involved everything from chinchillas to newly-minted gold sovereigns. Then there is the classic investment in bloodstock. Sometimes the horses exist, sometimes they don't. The lure of diamonds has also proved irresistible. For some of the people who rushed to buy gemstone "unit trusts"

the fraud of the century, according to the Commercial Crime Bureau of the International Chamber of Commerce, is the racket that goes under the name "prime bank instruments".

DIY guide for fraudsters

AN OFFSHORE base is a pre-requisite. Some of the best low-tax, low-regulation locations are close to home. Gibraltar may have tightened up, along with the Isle of Man, but Europe still bristles with "offshore" enclaves offering banking secrecy and protection from the prying eyes of supervisors.

Members of a group allowed in on the "ground floor" of what, in years to come, will be widely regarded as one of the great opportunities of the age. Hint that this is the one that governments, and the City establishment, "don't want you to know about".

Impressive documentation. Heavy paper covered in computer print and embossed with a beautiful company seal will comfort your victims and help you to ensure new recruits. It's easier to forge a document supposedly worth £5 million than to forge a five.

Hard-to-check assets. The splendid paperwork will divert investors' attention from the near-invisibility of their investments. Whether it be a ruby mine in Sri Lanka or a vineyard in Zimbabwe, make sure the "asset" is difficult to visit.

ORANGE ONLY GIVE YOU HALF AS MUCH AIRTIME FOR YOUR MONEY. (BUT, HEY, THEIR BILLS ARE TWICE AS LONG.)

60

minutes maximum for £29.38 on talk 60* orange

125

MINUTES MAXIMUM FOR £26.64 ON REGULAR CALLER PLUS* CELLNET

RING 0800 21 4000 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

THE NET THAT SETS YOU FREE.

*Based on contract recommended tariffs. 125 min max of off-peak calls. Nightrate reduces when near-free calls are made. Regular Subscriber Cellular Rate

20
Roger Cowe

HEADLINES this week have once again proclaimed the golden age of cheap mortgages, accompanied by puzzled articles wondering why Britons are not spending the resulting riches.

The answer to that puzzle is simple — despite the steady fall in mortgage rates, the real cost of buying a house is still at historically high levels and actually represents the forced savings which are sometimes urged on the British Government, mimicking Draconian schemes in places such as Singapore.

In the supposedly benighted 1970s, and especially under the mangled Labour Government from 1974 to 1979, the cost of a mortgage was not just cheap, it was negative.

The actual rate did rise to more than 12 per cent in 1976, but in that year the rate of inflation was almost 17 per cent. Only in 1978 did the real mortgage rate (after deducting inflation) turn positive again.

The result of Mrs Thatcher's great homeowner revolution, and the deregulation of the financial sector, was a sharp rise in mortgage costs.

Never since 1980 has the real cost of borrowing been negative.

The result is that buying a house takes more out of salaries, for longer than it did in the 1970s. But the corollary is that the money being poured into houses is actually worth something, not being eroded by inflation.

In the 1970s you could buy a house knowing that the pain would quickly ease. In the first year the mortgage might take a third of your income. But with inflation up to 24 per cent in 1975, income could double in three or four years, while the cost of the mortgage stayed the same or even fell.

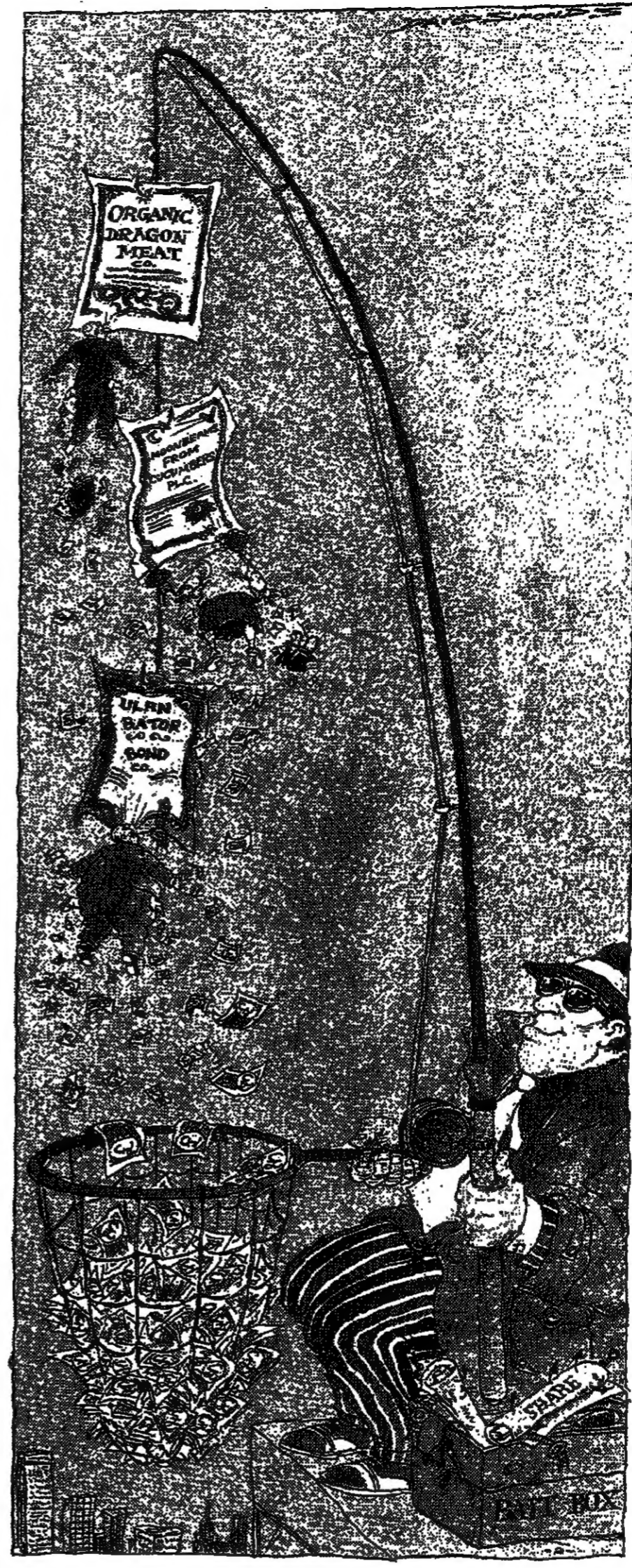
Housing is now much less affordable to begin with — the same net income buys a smaller property. To make matters worse, low inflation means that the pain of the initial mortgage just does not go away.

The slide in interest rates over the past few years has brought only minor relief, even to those who are not stuck on fixed rate mortgages.

As if all that wasn't bad enough, it isn't even possible to liberate cash by moving house.

The stubborn refusal of house prices in most parts of the country to rise even in line with general inflation means that the only way of freeing some capital for people who have bought since the mid-1980s is to move to a smaller house.

Next time you are told you've never had mortgages so good, remember the wonderful 1970s.



Quick Crossword No. 8099

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Across

- 1 Nest and tidy (5-3,5)
- 8 Sure (7)
- 9 Impassive philosopher (5)
- 10 Sell (4)
- 11 Fish, source of cavare (8)
- 12 Lasso (6)
- 14 Human beings (6)
- 17 Propose (8)
- 19 Equitable — market (4)
- 21 Balanced (5)
- 22 Radical (7)
- 24 A provocation (3,3,2,1,4)

Down

- 1 Curve (3)
- 2 Associate (7)
- 3 Vivacity (4)
- 4 Set on fire (6)
- 5 Spectator — or another publication? (9)
- 6 Idler (5)
- 7 Story-teller (8)
- 10 Unpaid worker (3)
- 12 Flowering tree (8)
- 15 Tableland (7)
- 16 Give witness (6)
- 18 Hillock (5)
- 20 Volcano (4)
- 23 Slippery fish (3)

Solution No. 8088

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